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MEMOIRS

AND

POETICAL REMAINS

OF THE LATE

JANE TAYLOR:

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HER CORRESPONDENCE.

BY ISAAC TAYLOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY B. J. HOLDSWORTH,
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1825.

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POETICAL REMAINS.

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POETICAL REMAINS.

PHILIP.

A FRAGMENT.

'MID scattered rocks, on Devon's northern sea,
Lies a small hamlet, and its name is Lea:
A drear lone place, whose few stone huts below
Seem to the spot spontaneously to grow:—
So rude, that to the eye they intermix
With rock and weed:—there are but five or six.
A rapid stream that dashes from the hill,
Turns the rude wheel-work of a noisy mill;
And falling there, where nought its fury bars,
Flies from the wheel in thousand glittering stars;
Producing life, and sound, and movement here,
Where all beside is silent, still, and drear.

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Like wit ill timed, this playful pageant mocks
The gloomy aspect of the sea and rocks.

Bare hills and barren downs for miles you trace,
Ere is attained the unfrequented place:
And when arrived, the traveller starts to find
So wild a spot, the abode of human kind.
Before him rolls the wide and lonely sea
Skirted with rocks—and there, below, is Lea.

Our story says, that, twenty years ago,
One decent dwelling this poor place could show.
A slated roof, the walls erect and square,
The windows curtained, and in good repair,
Bespoke the tenant's comfort: yes, and here
He lived, and walked, and mused, for many a year.
He had no calling: so his time ran out,
Chiefly in lonely rambles, round about.
Well he explored each smoothly hollowed cave—
The work of ages, with the incessant wave.

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Each rocky fragment, scattered wide to view,
Like an old friend, familiarly he knew.
On sunny days he loved for hours to lie
On some huge mass; and there, with patient eye,
The curious work of Nature's hand to trace,
—A work commenced when Time began his race,
And not yet finished:—ages as they rise,
Aid the slow process, and enrich the dyes.
Art's finest pencil could but rudely mock
The rich grey mosses broidered on a rock.
—And those gay watery grots he would explore—
Small excavations on a rocky shore,
That seem like fairy baths, or mimic wells,
Richly embossed with choicest weed and shells:
—As if her trinkets Nature chose to hide
Where nought invaded but the flowing tide.

Such were his pastimes; and with these, his mind
A listless entertainment still could find;
For while the eye pursued its busy course,
His own long musings followed, as by force.

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And thus the past, by memory's aid supplied,
—Its scenes and sufferings—closely seemed allied
With these wild objects—yes, identified:
Till each some deep remembrance would reveal,
And the whole prospect yield the effect of all.

This gloomy station, with intent perverse,
He chose, not for the better, but the worse.
Denied the good he once had hoped to share,
He scorned to take the refuse life might spare.
And long he sought a settlement to find,
Where joy could never come, if 'twere inclined.
It was with strange delight—with bitter glee,
That first he stood, and gazed, and fixed on Lea.

But man, short-sighted and dependant still,
Succeeds not fully, e'en in choosing ill.
When Philip used to see, at eve returned,
His white walls glowing, as the embers burned,
His neat small parlour, ever wont to bear
The recent marks of Peggy's daily care,

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And Peggy's self, more nice and trim than he,
Preface with smiles the all-reviving tea,
He felt that, if of *charm* was life bereft,
Yet, e'en for him, some *comfort* there was left.

Peggy, his sole domestic, slowly grew
To be, in fact, his sole companion too.
When first she came she never thought—nor he—
With her odd master she could make so free:—
She was not pert:—he wished not to confer
With any living—doubtless, not with her.
But man is social, e'en against his will;
And woman kind, whatever rank she fill.
Her master came a lonely stranger here;
Feeble, dejected, friendless—'twould appear.
She pitied;—woman does; nor pitied less,
For knowing not the cause of his distress.
She was not young; and had her troubles known;
So that she felt his sorrows with her own;
And soon resolved to labour, all she could,
To cheer his spirits, and to do him good.

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Though few and mean the attainments she could boast,
Peggy had passed her life upon the coast;
And she could thoughts and sentiments disclose,
Such as the inland peasant rarely knows.
On squally nights, or when it blew a gale,
Long she would stand, recounting tale on tale,
Of wreck or danger, or of rescue bold,
That she had witnessed, or her kindred told;
Bringing each long-lost circumstance to mind:
And genuine feeling taught her where to find
Terms more expressive, though of vulgar use,
Than hours of patient study will produce.
Her native eloquence would place in view
The very scene, and all its terrors too.
Meantime, to excuse her stay, she used to stand,
The tidy hearth still trimming—brush in hand:
Till he, with kind, though not familiar air,
Would interrupt with—"Peggy, take a chair."
A chair she took;—less easy when she had;
But soon resumed her tale, and both were glad.

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Thus she became, at length, a parlour guest;
And he was happier, though 'twas ne'er confessed:
Rocks, sea, and hills, were here his friends by
choice;
—But there is music in the human voice.

So passed their evenings oft; but now and then,
As the mood seized him, he would take a pen;
Wherewith, though slowly, into form was cast
A brief unfinished record of the past.
Whene'er for this her master gave the word,
His faithful Peggy neither spoke nor stirred:
She took her knitting—chose a distant seat,
And there she sat so still, and looked so neat,
'Twas quite a picture:—there was e'en a grace
In the trim border round her placid face.

When Philip wrote he never seemed so well,
—Was startled even if a cinder fell,
And quickly worried;—Peggy saw it all,
And felt the shock herself, if one did fall.

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Of knowledge, she had little in her head;
But a nice feeling often serves instead;
And she had more than many better bred.

But now he felt, like men of greater note,
The harmless wish of reading what he wrote:—
Not to the world;—no, that he could not bear;
But here sat candid Peggy, in her chair:
And so it was, that he, whose inward woe
Was much too sacred for mankind to know,
He—so refined, mysterious, and so proud,
To a poor servant read his life aloud.
How weak is man, amused with things like these!
Or else, how vain are writers! which you please.

All Peggy heard she deemed exceeding good;
But chiefly praised the parts she understood.
At these, by turns, she used to smile or sigh;
And, with full credit, pass the other by:
While he, like men and wits of modern days,
Felt inly flattered by her humble praise.

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Yet vigour failed to accomplish the design;
And 'twas but seldom he would add a line:
But when he died—some years ago at Lea,
Old Peggy sent the manuscript to me.

Much has been long forgotten; but I'm sure
That I was always pensive, proud, and poor.
Much is remembered; and I partly know
How past events conspired to make me so.

When first my gentle mother smiled on me,
The thing to her was no new sight to see.
Babies are surely novelties no more
When there have been eleven or twelve before:
And yet she smiled. But neighbours did not fail,
With one consent my coming to bewail:—
"Poor Mrs. Singleton!—I wish her joy:—
Bless me! poor woman—there's another boy!"

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Such was my earliest greeting on this earth;
Yes, an intruder, from my very birth.
And such I've ever been, or felt to be,
Whate'er the cause—unhappiness to me.

I never thrived; yet lived, as children will,
Where there are plenty;—though they're always ill.
I lived, and grew a pale unlikely lad.
The sweet attentions other children had,
I rarely knew; for none the trouble took
To cast on me the kind admiring look,
To pat my shapeless cheek, or stroke my hair;
There were no graces, no attractions there;
—Nothing to notice; so they passed me by:
And none could blame them for it; nor did I:
No—but I felt it—to neglect alive,
And to contempt too keenly sensitive,
Beyond my years I felt: none ever guessed
The feelings brooding in my childish breast;—
Not e'en my mother, who would me employ
On servile errands, humbling to a boy;—

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To fetch and carry as a servant goes,
All in broad daylight, in my shabby clothes:
She could not help it:—What was to be done;
We had to lend assistance, every one;
And as the youngest, 'twas in turn my fate
To do what all had done, with inward hate.

My parents, never vulgar, strove in vain,
A decent style of living to maintain:
And strove to make our minds and manners rise
Above our narrow means:—and they were wise.
But need by pride itself must be obeyed;
Though last to yield, and hardest to persuade.
So in and out I went, and up and down,
Our open, light, genteel, and handsome town.
When groups of dressy people passed me by,
I shrunk along, and looked ashamed and shy:
And e'en the hated basket would employ,
To skreen the patched and spotted corduroy.
How needless this!—I did not then suspect
How properly neglect, is called *neglect*.

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A thing so mean as I appeared to them,
They would not take the trouble to contemn—
Scarcely to look at:—and suppose they had?
They would have seen a meagre, shabby lad.
Is there an object to the senses brought,
That seems so little worth a second thought;
Or that the trouble would so ill repay,
To people well and handsome, smart and gay?

Children are blessings, when your means o'erflow;
For all things then combine to make them so.
Nature is helped by art's directing care:—
The boys are noble, and the girls are fair:
Tempers are gentle, manners are polite;
And every graceful movement looks aright.

But when fond parents are compelled by need
To count how many mouths they have to feed,
The touch of care each native grace consumes,
And beauty withers, even ere it blooms.
True;—love will triumph o'er the rubs it bears;
Yet the fine polish of affection wears.

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Such love was ours; nor was it ever lost,
Though, by domestic troubles, chilled and crossed.

'Mid daily straits and cares, our childish play
Was mischief:—we were always in the way.
The needful goods were hurt by every touch:
So that our sports and frolics cost too much.
The bread of carefulness was all our fare;
And we were reared an early yoke to bear.

While youthful spirit and elastic hope,
Long kept my brothers and my sisters up;
I brooded:—'twas my nature—'twas my plague;
Pressed both by real sufferings, and by vague.
My mind's disease, in brief description brought,
Perhaps might best be named—incessant thought.
'Twas thought, that deep on every heart-string played,
Thrilled every nerve—on every vital preyed;
Consumed my vigour, checked my growth, and now
Its early lines are furrows on my brow.

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Years passed, and brought the dreaded time about,
When I must choose a calling, and go out.
They wished me most to turn my mind to trade;
And argued much; but never could persuade.
Some rare profession, 'twas my wish to find,
That leaves one independent of mankind.
I wished for money:—there was need of that;
But did not like myself to hold the hat.
The gold must always drop where none could look,
To see the hand that gave, nor that which took;
Like private offerings charitably slid
Through the small crevice in a box's lid.
But here invention proved so dull and slow,
Their patience failed:—my father told me so.
At last by luck, by favour, and in haste,
I in a neighbouring banking house was placed.
I urged objections; but they scarce were heard:
And after all, I secretly preferred
To starve for life upon my pride and quill,
Than thrive on savings, filtered through a till.

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A banker's clerk, without a second hope:—
Such was the prospect through my telescope!
My chief employer was a man of sense,
Although he dealt in shillings, pounds, and pence.
Expert in business, punctual, cautious, wise;
Whom those who hated, never could despise.
A man of consequence, for miles around;
And all dependants trembled, when he frowned.
He had a lordly air, a portly mien:
In dress, some cost, and even pains, were seen:
And well the scattered powder used to shine
Upon the blue and glossy superfine!
To menials stern, and hard to be appeased—
No man was more agreeable—when he pleased.
He kept a table; and 'twas often graced
By men of wealth, and even men of taste.
Then, frowns were banished by a courtly smile;
And all was bland and gracious—for a while.

His great concerns, like some complex machine,
He moved by springs, that more were felt than seen.

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Of that machine, I seemed to him, at best,
A minor wheel, that turned with all the rest.
But as at first, I did not rightly hit,
Prompt means and harsh, were used to make me fit.
He taught me, not as one might teach a child;
But ground me down, till every notch was filed.
I had some talent; but 'twas always hid,
For want of confidence in what I did.
Timid and bashful—nature formed me so;
My conscious meanness made the temper grow:
And now, beneath a rigour too severe,
I seemed a fool—perplexed with shame and fear.

Here clerks of various office, half a score,
Spoke that contempt I had but guessed before.
Poorest and least, and lowest in degree,
There was no task too servile thought for me.
Small claims had some; but they could joke and chat;
And all were smart;—I was not even that.
I was unhappy; but I did not speak:
Too proud to vent a murmur—not too meek.

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But yet I played a game at their expense:
All creatures have some weapon of defence;
And so had I: with woman's keenness cursed,
I saw the heart; and seeing, thought the worst:
Suspected evil, where I could not see;
And motives well were analysed by me.

Unnoticed, unsuspected, at my desk,
I loved to mark their manners and burlesque.
Amused, though vexed, to hear the loud pretence
Of some, who really had not half my sense:
—To find myself despised, and counted nought,
By those who nothing knew, and nothing thought.
I was not vain; nor need I this repeat;
There was enough to check my self conceit!
But yet I knew, however low my lot,
I had a taste—a feeling, they had not.

Yes, taste I had; and now all earthly bliss
Solace and refuge, seemed denied, but this:—

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Shut from the world's delights by various bars,
I used to roam and revel 'mid the stars.
Who could forbid the timid, bashful eye,
Downcast by day, from ranging through the sky,
When in my attic, with untold delight,
I watched the changing splendours of the night?
Those hours were sweet; nor can it be denied,
That with the pleasure, there was mingled pride.
Kings—no, nor bankers, that to me was more,
No brighter sight could see, with all their store.
But stars and worlds of light, are not the things
Most in esteem with bankers, or with kings.
Such thoughts I had; and let it be confessed,
The oppressor here, must yield to the oppressed.
While thought is free, howe'er enslaved the wretch,
He has a circuit where no arm can stretch.
Thought has a power that makes the meanest drudge,
At once the tyrant's censor, and his judge.

In milder moods I looked from side to side,
For better comfort than I gained from pride:—

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" Is there no object more sublimely bright,
More worthy high pursuit, than worlds of light?
Is there no refuge for the poor oppressed?
For weary wanderers, is there not a rest?
Cast out of men—despised by all about,
Is there no friend who will not cast me out?"

* * * * * * * *

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TO MAD. DE STAEL.

WRITTEN AFTER READING CORINNE OU L'ITALIE.

O WOMAN, greatly gifted! why
Wert thou not gifted from on high?
What had that noble genius done—
That knew all hearts—all things, but *one*,
—Had that been known? O, would it might
Be whispered, ere she took her flight!
Where, where, is that fine spirit hurled,
That seemed unmeet for either world?

While o'er thy magic page I bend,
I know thee—claim thee for my friend:
With thee a secret converse hold,
And see my inmost thoughts unfold.
Each notion crude, defined—expressed;
And certain, what I vaguely guessed.

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And hast thou taught, with cruel skill,
The art to suffer better still;—
Grief's finest secret to explore,
Though understood too well before?
Ah well, I'd thank thee if I might;
Although so wrong, thou art so right!
While I condemn, my heart replies,
And deeper feelings sympathize.

Thy view of life—that painful view,
How false it is!—and yet how true!
"Life without love—a cheerless strife;
Yet love so rarely given to life."
And why must truth and virtue, why,
This mighty claim of love deny?
—What was this earth, so full, so fair?—
A cheerless desert, bleak and bare—
God knew it was—till love was there.
Say, has the heart a glance at bliss—
One—till it glance or gaze at this?

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Ah no! unblessed, unsoothed the lot,
Fair though it seem, that knows it not!
'Tis true!—and to the truth replies
A thousand joyless hearts and eyes;—
Eyes beamless—hearts that do not break—
They cannot—but that always ache;
And slowly wither, day by day,
Till life at last is dried away.

"Love or Religion;" yes, she knew,
Life has no choice but 'twixt the two:
But when she sought *that* balm to find,
She guessed and groped; but still was blind.
Aloft she flew, yet failed to see
Aught but an earthly deity.
The humble Christian's holy love,
O, how it calmly soars above
These storms of passion!—Yes, too much
I've felt her talent's magic touch.

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Return, my soul, to that retreat
From sin and woe—thy Saviour's feet!
There learn an art she never knew,
The heart's own empire to subdue;—
All to resign that He denies;—
A large, but willing sacrifice.
To Him in meek submission bend;
Own Him an all-sufficient friend;
Here, and in holy worlds above,
My portion—and my only love!

September 23, 1822.

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TO THE MOON.

WHAT is it that gives thee, mild Queen of the Night,
That secret intelligent grace?
O why should I gaze with such tender delight,
On thy fair, but insensible face?

What gentle enchantment possesses thy beam,
Beyond the warm sunshine of day?
Thy bosom is cold as the glittering stream,
Where dances thy tremulous ray.

Canst thou the sad heart of its sorrow beguile,
Or grief's fond indulgence suspend?
Yet where is the mourner but welcomes thy smile,
And loves thee almost as a friend?

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The tear that looks bright in thy beam as it flows,
Unmoved thou dost ever behold:
The sorrow that loves in thy light to repose,
To thee it has never been told.

And yet thou dost soothe me, and ever I find,
While watching thy gentle retreat,
A moonlight composure steal over the mind,
Poetical, pensive, and sweet.

I think of the years that for ever are fled,
Of follies by others forgot;
Of joys that are vanished, of hopes that are dead,
Of friendships that were, and are not.

I think of the future—still gazing the while,
As thou couldst those secrets reveal:
But ne'er dost thou grant an encouraging smile,
To answer the mournful appeal.

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Those beams which so bright through my casement
appear,
To far distant scenes they extend;
Illumine the dwellings of those that are dear,
And sleep on the grave of my friend.

Then still I must love thee, mild Queen of the Night,
Since feeling and fancy agree
To make thee a source of unfailing delight,
A friend and a solace to me.

1811.

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TO MRS. L.

WHY is it that my friend and I,
Look forth on life so variously?
She, on the present, future, past,
A sanguine smile is prone to cast:
—I weep o'er scenes for ever fled;
The impending future wait with dread;
And see the present moment fly,
With languid, listless apathy.

'Tis not that when our course was planned,
'Twas done with such a partial hand
As strewed, for long succeeding years,
Thy path with flowers, and mine with tears:
For grief has aimed a shaft at thee;
And joy in turn has glanced at me.

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E'en should the self same path be ours,
Set with alternate weeds and flowers,
You, from its entrance to its close,
Would point at these, and I at those.
In gathering clouds that o'er us form,
You greet a shade, I bode a storm—
Still choosing to expect the worst;
Since clouds *are* clouds, and often burst.
Yet soon, you say, they pass, and O,
How cheering is the faithful bow!
Thus argues each; and all the while
I weep;—and you persist to smile.

If in the depth of nature's laws
Philosophy should seek the cause,
Perhaps the whole might be descried
In movements of the crimson tide;
As brisk or fainting pulses show
Its rapid, or its tardy flow.

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How'er that be, it might be wise
To form a mutual compromise—
Or friendly firm, combining so,
Hope, Fear, Indifference, Care and Co.
Then would concessions fair and true,
Encourage me, attemper you.
You would hope's guile allow, and I,
That fear exceeds reality:—
You, that all gladness shows alloy;
And I, that grief is dashed with joy:—
Care, too distrustful, I confess;
And you, a treacherous sanguineness.
When thus opposed extremes unite,
The aggregate will just be right:
The sanguine smile is checked by fear;
And hope shall glitter through a tear.

April, 1820.

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LOVE AND FAME.

A FABLE.

As once beneath a spreading shade—
A deep serene seclusion,
Wandered alone a pensive maid,
All thoughtless of intrusion,
Two gentle strangers wooing came;
And one was Love, and one was Fame.

Fame first, a silver trumpet fills,
With one shrill blast inspiring:
It rang and echoed round the hills;—
The maiden stood admiring;
Yet startled, trembled, at the blast;
But listened, till she smiled at last.

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With timid voice and pleading eyes,
Love told his gentle story;
But while he spoke of pains and sighs,
His rival talked of glory:
Fame strove a brighter flame to prove;
But looked not so sincere as Love.

The maiden stood with changing hue,
Their various language heeding:
To Fame she gave attention due;
But when poor Love was pleading,
Assumed an aspect more severe,
And scarcely seemed to lend an ear.

When Love confessed his secret flames,
And told of pangs inflicted,
Fame boasted of superior claims,
And boldly contradicted:
At length the contest warmer grew,
And words ran high between the two.

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Fame talked of sway in distant years,
When Love would laugh and leave her;
Love looked indignant through his tears,
Exclaiming—You deceive her!
Ah, what so fickle as thy breath!
But I am faithful—strong as death.

In age, when you and friendship fly,
And leave to gloom and sadness,
I live to gild the wintry sky
With many a beam of gladness:
Yes, I would cheer her to the last,
When silent was your faithless blast.

But you, said Fame, have cares and strife,
To cloud each gloomy morrow;—
And I allay the ills of life,
Said Love, and sweeten sorrow;
And one soft word of mine can soothe,
And make its stormy current smooth.

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I boast, said Fame, of hope and pride;
And triumph in my treasures;
And *I* have pleasures, Love replied—
Such peaceful, sacred pleasures
As you (although triumphant still)
Did never yield, nor ever will.

Yes, and the pleasures that *I* bring
(While feeling's power endures)
More sweetly blend—more closely cling
To woman's heart, than yours.
You may perchance her favour buy;
But nature sanctions not the tie.

The maiden wearied with debate,
Arrests the fierce contention:
One anxious moment does but wait,
In agonized suspension:—
Then, urged by doubt, by pride, by shame,
She sighed, and gave her hand to Fame.

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REMONSTRANCE TO TIME.

STAY hoary Sage! one moment deign
To hear thy duteous child complain;
Nor scorn her pensive lay:
But while a suppliant at thy side,
Thy fearful scythe in pity hide,
And that old hour-glass throw aside;
They fright my song away.

Regardless of thy hoary age,
Thou indefatigable Sage,
Incessant is thy toil:
Thou canst, with an unnatural joy,
Thine own ingenious works destroy;
For 'tis thy favourite employ
To perfect and to spoil.

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And Beauty's temple, Wisdom's brow,
Old Time! it well befits thee now,
With pains to decorate:
Scatter thy silver honours there,
But, O good father Time, forbear!
I ask thee not to deck *my* hair;
It ill becomes thy state.

Go, bind thine ivy o'er the oak,
And spread thy rich embroidered cloak
Around his trunk the while;
Or deck with moss the abbey wall,
And paint grotesque the Gothic hall,
And sculpture, with thy chisel small,
The monumental pile:

But oh! from such majestic height,
Wilt thou, descending, stoop thy flight
To seek *my* lowly door?

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What glory canst thou reap from me,
By all neglected, but by thee?—
Consider thine own dignity,
And proudly pass me o'er.

—But false the hope! and vain the prayer!
Thy hand was never known to spare;
Nor will thy speed delay:
Yet hear thy trembling victim's sigh;
If e'er thy microscopic eye
Perchance one youthful grace espy,
May *that* become thy prey!

Thy wrinkles, and thy locks of snow
(The choicest gifts thy hands bestow)
At those I do not start:
But come not thou, a treacherous guest,
To steal those feelings, dearest, best—
That glow that warms the youthful breast:—
With *these* I cannot part.

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Oh! should such joys supplanted be
By frigid worldly policy;
And cold distrust ensue;
Adieu, ye dear poetic powers,
And Fancy's fair enchanted bowers,
And all the sweets that once were ours;
A long, a sad adieu!

But is it in thy power to chill
Affection's dear transporting thrill,
And Friendship's fervid glow?
Ah! if thy cruel aim be this,
I shudder at thy marble kiss,
And clinging to my parting bliss,
Call bitter tears to flow.

But Sire, command these fears away:
Tell me, affection's milder ray
Shall gild my wintry sky:—

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That hope my fainting spirit cheers,
Dispels my sighs, and dries my tears:
Angelic *now* thy form appears,
And mercy in thine eye.

June, 1806.

Digitized by Google

SUNSET.

Grey twilight spreads her sable mantle far,
And dewy mists obscure the tints of day;
Yet, with mild lustre glows the evening star,
To cheer the lonely traveller on his way.

For Sol's departing rays no longer gleam
To gild the mountain pine, or lofty spire;
O'er western waves he spreads his golden beam;
And ocean gladdens, as the shades retire...

While Albion's sons in grateful slumbers rest,
And silent darkness reigns around our isle;
He rides resplendent to the glowing west,
On fair Columbia's fertile plains to smile;
Her busy cities wake to clamours gay;
Her waving woods resound, and hail the rising day.

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THE FAIRIES' SONG.

HARK! for the beetle winds his horn,
The dew-drop glitters on the thorn;
Now let us to the daisied lawn,
Dancing along.

From acorn cells we spring to view,
In robes of moonshine, tinged with blue,
And pearly bands of evening dew
Bound in our hair.

And now we form the magic ring,
And merrily dance and merrily sing;
A fairy's dance is a pretty thing
In the moonshine.

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But ere the dawn returns again,
We wind along the wooded lane,
And glow-worm torches light the train
All the way home.

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TO MISS G.

ON THE DEATH OF HER ROBIN.

WHERE Flora holds her court, arrayed
In tints no art can borrow,
From that fair garden's leafy shade
Proceeds the tone of sorrow.
Why is the tone of sorrow heard?—
It is for Mary's favourite bird.

How late on gay and glossy wing
He soared, as fancy led him;
And oft a grateful lay would sing
To her who loved and fed him;
And little dreamed of ill—but oh!
Some wintry blast has laid him low.

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Poor Robin! when the sunny beams
  Bespoke the year advancing,
With what fond visionary schemes
  Thy heart perhaps was dancing—
Of days of joy, and nights of rest,
Of speckled egg, and downy nest.

Yet no such thoughts might ere arise,
  To excite his joy or sorrow;
Too foolish he—or else too wise,
  To think about to-morrow.
Perhaps within his tiny pate,
There was no room to speculate.

But ne'er could Mary's curious quest
  Discern, whene'er intruding,
What thoughts within her Robin's breast
  From morn to night were brooding:
She knows—and then enough is known—
What hopes have fluttered in her own.

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And may she learn from Robin's end,
To check hope's fond illusion;
And not unfaithful deem her friend,
Nor think it an intrusion,
Who thus with chemic art appears,
To extract a moral from her tears.

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AN ENIGMA.

Ye philosophers hark!
My complexion is dark,
Reflection and silence my character mark.

No record on earth
Discovers my birth;
Long reigned I in solitude, silence, and dearth.

I travel away,
In sombre array;
But my turban and sandals are silvery grey.

Majestic my mien,
And my dark form is seen
All sparkling in gems, like an African queen.

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One pearl that I wear
Is more brilliant and rare
Than the loveliest gem in a princess's hair.

My stature is tall,
But at seasons I crawl,
Or shrink myself almost to nothing at all.

Invisibly hurled,
I traverse the world,
And o'er every land is my standard unfurled.

I silently roll
Round the icy-bound pole;
And long the wide region endures my controul.

From earliest time
I was grave and sublime;
But often am made the accomplice of crime.

Digitized by Google

My intellect teems
With visions and dreams,
And wild tales of terror, my favourite themes.

Yet sorrow and pain
Oft welcome my reign,
And eagerly watch for my coming again:

For a handmaid of mine,
With aspect benign,
Deals out, at my bidding, a soft anodyne.

My sister down there,
Is transcendently fair,
But we never once happened to meet any where.

Advancing behold
Her banners of gold!
Then I must away, with my story half told.

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THE VASE AND THE PITCHER.

A FABLE.

ONE day when a grand entertainment was ended,
A rich China Vase, lately come from abroad,
In which every tint of the rainbow was blended,
Spoke thus to a Pitcher that stood on the board:—

"I hope, rustic neighbour, you don't feel distressed
At standing before me, so shabbily dressed:
It will mitigate, may be, your feelings to know,
That though so superb, I can stoop to the low.

"'Tis true, that before I arrived from abroad,
Beyond the wide Ganges, I lived with a lord:
'Tis true, in the west, that no king can procure,
For his service of state, so splendid a ewer.

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" 'Tis true, that gay ladies, in feathers and pearls,
Survey and admire me—and barons and earls:
'Tis true that I am, as you must understand,
Prodigiously rich, and excessively grand.

" But you, paltry bottle! I pity your fate:
Whence came ye, coarse neighbour, I prithee relate;
And tell us how is it you ever endure,
So graceless a shape, and so vile a contour?"

The Pitcher, who stood with his hand on his hip,
Shrugged up his round shoulders, and curled his brown lip;
And grave to appearance, but laughing inside,
He thus, from his orifice, coolly replied:—

" I come, noble Vase, from the cottage below,
Where I serve a poor husbandman, if you must know;
And my trade (might I venture to name such a thing)
Is bringing pure water each morn from the spring.

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" There's a notable lass, who at dawn of the day,
When dew-drops yet glisten on meadow and spray,
When the lark soars aloft, and the breezes are cool,
Sets off on light tip-toe, with me to the pool.

" The pool is surrounded with willow and ash;
At noon, in the sun, its dark waters will flash;
And through the deep shade, you at intervals hear
The lowing of kine, in the meadow land near.

" The sheep with their lambkins there browse at their ease,
Beneath the cool arch of embowering trees;
While low creeping herbs give their sweets to the air;
Wild thyme, and the violet, and primroses fair.

' 'Tis here that myself every morning she bears;
Then back to the cot in the valley repairs:
The faggot is blazing, the breakfast is placed,
And appetite sweetens coarse fare to the taste.

Digitized by Google

" In these humble services passes my life,
Remote from the city—its noise and its strife:
Though homely, I'm fit for the work of the day;
And I am not ashamed of my true British clay.

" And now, noble Vase, may I ask if 'tis true,
That you stand every day here with nothing to do?
A poor idle gentleman, up in your niche,
Quite useless;—and nothing but handsome and rich!

" They neither entrust you with victuals nor drink:
You must have but a poor sorry life on't, I think;
And though such an elegant creature you're thought,
Pray, are you not tired with doing of nought?"

But the Vase would not answer such questions as these;
And the Pitcher felt glad he was not a Chinese.

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AN ENIGMA.

WHERE nature wears her wildest dress,
In colours all her own,
Where howling winds rage merciless,
I spread my stormy throne:
And loud and angry, wild and rude,
I reign in dreary solitude.

When summer skies are clear to view,
And sunbeams dance around,
I wear a robe of purest blue,
With silvery fringes bound;
And blush and sparkle, smile and play,
Like beauty on a festal day.

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Sweet evening sets her earliest star
  Upon my peaceful breast,
And I restore the gem afar,
  To deck Aurora's vest;
The host of heaven in bright array,
To me, by turns, their homage pay.

The silent cave, the sparkling grot,
  In unknown realms, I ween,
Where foot of mortal enters not,
  Nor vulture's eye hath seen—
'Tis there I love to steal along,
And pour my everlasting song.

And there, with pearl and amber crowned,
  I hold my gentler court,
While freshest breezes play around,
  And merry mermaids sport;
And thousand graceful Naiads stand,
With streaming urns in either hand.

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A STORY.

THERE once was a man who contrived a balloon,
To carry him whither?—Why up to the moon.
One fine starlight night he set sail for the sky,
And joyfully bid our poor planet good bye.
He mounted aloft with incredible speed,
And saw the green earth every moment recede.
"Farewell," he exclaimed, "to thy pride and conceit,
Oppression and injury, fraud and deceit;
Thy flagrant abuses, thy luxury too,
And all thy gay pageants, for ever adieu.
Thy festivals, spectacles, learning and lore;
My share in thy pleasures I gladly restore:
Thy kings and thy nobles, lords, ladies and squires,
And all the poor world in its dotage admires.
From its factions and parties and politics free,
The statesmen and heroes are nothing to me:

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Bonaparte in his cage, on Helena's wild shore,
And all his devices, to me are no more.
Farewell to thy vallies, in verdure arrayed;
Farewell to thy merchandise, traffic and trade;
Thy wide swelling rivers, that roll to the seas;
Thy dark waving forests, that sigh to the breeze:
From Britain to China, or Ganges' wide stream,
All fades on my sight like a vanishing dream."

He spoke, and with pleasure soon darted his eyes on
The moon, just appearing above the horizon;
And sitting upright, with his hand in his pocket,
Shot up the dark sky, into space like a rocket.
But the swiftness with which his light vehicle sped,
Brought on such a giddiness into his head,
That he lay a long time in his boat without knowing
How long he had been, or which way he was going.
At length he aroused from his stupor, when lo!
The beautiful planet was shining below!

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Already so near was he come as to see
Its mountains and vallies, as plain as could be.
With feelings no language could well represent,
He quickly prepared his machine for descent.
A fine open plain, much resembling, he said,
Some spots in old England, before him was spread,
Whose smoothness and verdure his presence invited;
And there, all amazement, our traveller alighted.
What thrillings of rapture, what tears of delight,
Now melted this signally fortunate wight:
And thus he expressed his astonishment soon—
"Dear me, what a wonder to be in the moon!"

'Twas now early morning, the firmament clear;
For there the sun rises, the same as down here.
He took out his pocket-book, therefore, and wrote
Whatever he saw that was worthy of note.
For instance;—The soil appeared sandy and loose;
The pasture much finer than we can produce.

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He picked up a stone, which he wished he could hand
To some learned geologists, down in our land.
A blue little weed next attracted our writer,
Not very unlike to our hare-bell, but brighter,
And looked, as he said, most decidedly *lunar:*
—He wished he had come on this enterprise sooner.
But still he was far more impatient to trace
What sort of inhabitants lived in the place:—
Perhaps they were dragons, or horrible things,
Like fishes with feathers, or serpents with wings.
Thus deeply engaged in conjectural thought,
His eye by an object was suddenly caught;
To which, on advancing, he found, you must know,
'Twas just such a mile-stone as ours are below;
And he read, all amazed, in plain English, this line—
"Twelve miles to Old Sarum, to Andover nine."
In short, the whole wonder at once to explain,
The man had alighted on Salisbury Plain.

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THE SHIPWRECKED LASCAR.

(A True Tale.)

ADDRESSED TO MISS M.

—SHE sailed in her pride from the regions of day;
Her cargo was rich, and her pennons were gay:
Long homeward she scudded, defying the blast,
Till Britain's green hills were descried from the mast.

Then gathered the tempest, then heightened the gale;
The hearts of her bravest were ready to fail:
Night adds to the horror, and deepens the roar:—
She lies in the morning a wreck on our shore.

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And Heaven in its mercy has rescued the crew;
They live, and return to their country anew:
But one sickly stranger—unfriended, unknown,
Is left by his comrades to perish alone.

He thinks of his home, for no shelter has he;
His wife and his mother are over the sea:
He came from the Islands of Spices afar,
—The dark Asiatic, the gentle Lascar.

He stretches in anguish the languishing limb,
Expecting no pity, no mercy for him;
—But England has pity—and O, there was one,
Who saw his dark face, and the kindness was done.

She took him, she nursed him with tender address;
And fair was the hand that relieved his distress:
She came like the angel of mercy from far,
To minister health to the dying Lascar.

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His wants and her pity could only be known
By broken expressions, and sympathy's tone;
But pity has language no words can supply,
And gratitude speaks from the eloquent eye.

He watches her coming, for all must appear
In safety and comfort, if *Madame* be near;
He sits in her *casa*, unclouded by care,
For nothing is wanting, if *Madame* be there.

Her care is rewarded:—the sick man is well;
And now he must bid her a final farewell:
Have pity ye sailors, ye sons of the brave!
Oh, bear him in tenderness over the wave!

Borne on by the swell of the ocean he goes
To tell to his kindred the tale of his woes;
To tell his dark beauty, with many a tear,
Of *Madame's* kind *casa*, that sheltered him here.

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And O, that the knowledge she strove to impart,
May lighten the gloom of his desolate heart!
And long as he lives will be heard from afar,
The blessings and prayers of the grateful Lascar.

Marazion, November, 1815.

Digitized by Google

THE BEGGAR BOY.

I'm a poor little beggar, my mammy is dead;
My daddy is naughty, and gives me no bread:
O'er London's wide streets all the day long I roam,
And when night comes on, I've got never a home.

I would not be idle, like some wicked boys,
So I got me a basket with trinkets and toys;
Nobody was e'er more industrious than I,
Nobody more willing to sell if you'll buy.

I've Bonaparte's life, and adventures, and birth;
And histories of all the great men of the earth:
Enigmas, and riddles, and stories complete:
Come buy them, dear ladies, a penny a sheet.

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Here's cottons, and bobbins, and laces so white,
And thimbles, and scissars, well polished and bright:
Fine pictures of Frenchmen, and Tartar, and Swede;
And Darton's gay books for good children to read.

I've all the debates in the parliament made,
On sinecures, pensions, and taxes new laid:
Accounts of the battles, by land and by sea,
That were fought in one thousand eight hundred and three.

In summer, gay flowers and nosegays I sell,
Sweet cowslips, and roses, and jasmines to smell:
Water cresses for breakfast, fresh gathered and green,
From bad weeds and hemlock, picked careful and clean.

But alas! 'tis in vain that I mournfully cry,
And hold out my basket to all who pass by;
I fancy they're thinking of other affairs;
For they seem not to notice, or me or my wares.

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I would get me a place that was decent and clean,
Though in a capacity ever so mean;
But nobody credits a word that I say,
For they call me a vagrant, and turn me away.

In the evening I wander, all hungry and cold,
And the bright Christmas fires through the windows behold:
Ah, while the gay circles such comforts enjoy,
They think not of me, a poor perishing boy!

Oh had I coat, if 'twere ever so old,
This poor trembling body to screen from the cold;
Or a hat, from the weather to shelter my head;
Or an old pair of shoes, or a morsel of bread!

'Tis almost a fortnight since I've tasted meat;
Pray give a poor creature a mouthful to eat;
And while you in plenty all comforts enjoy,
Oh think upon me, a poor perishing boy.

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LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

"HE FASHIONETH THEIR HEARTS ALIKE."

A WISH fair friend you late expressed,
—A modest wish, to know
The thoughts that in another's breast
Were passing to and fro.
'Tis little worth, I own, to say;
But Grace commands, and I obey.

Yet must I such a task fulfil,
And e'en perform it now?
Yes fair confessor—yes I will,
But you shall tell me how:
To see my heart, consult your own,
And all you *wish* to know, is known.

Digitized by Google

A free communion thus we hold;
Compare our "common lot;"
And yet no secret need be told;
Convenient—is it not?
So much we may:—no more we dare,
Friends, and yet strangers, as we are.

When wood and vale, and light and shade,
Lay varied late to view,
When sunbeams on the waters played,
And heaven was bright and blue,
We felt;—but what we felt, and why,
Could you explain?—nor more could I.

Did fancy dare indulge that day
In sport she loves so well?
Did fairies dance, did zephyrs play,
In every sylvan dell—
Then vanish—all reduced to nought,
Touched by the wand of sober thought?

Digitized by Google

Did pensive musings of the past,
When other skies were bright,
Their momentary shadows cast
O'er hills, and hearts, so light!—
It might be so perhaps with some,
While others glanced at joys to come.

Did lovely nature thus employ
Her magic o'er the mind—
Awaking gladness, sadness, joy,
By turns, or all combined;
Till eye to eye could best impart
The thrill that went from heart to heart?

Thus while the buoyant spirits flow,
How soft the moments glide!
But tell me, tell me, if you know,
Their far receding tide!
From hence at least you may perceive
What flat and dreary sands they leave.

Digitized by Google

Then life looks cheerless, does it not?
Not yet, perhaps, to you,
Who see it from a different spot,
And gain a fairer view;
Then ask not if 'tis smooth or rough;
For time will tell you, soon enough.

But O, forgive the dark presage
That shades too oft my sight;
Turn quickly to a fairer page,
And read in lines of light—
(Most bright when life has lost its zest)
That word of cheer—"There is a rest."

Hull, June 29, 1821.

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TO A POETICAL FRIEND.

WHY so misname the writer's task?
The honour all is hers;
"A favour," if a Poet ask,
A favour he confers.

Yet to fulfil the kind request
Is skill she dare not own;—
Who to a Poet can suggest
A thought to him unknown?

What can the roving eye explore
That earth or heaven displays,
But his has glanced upon before,
With more enraptured gaze?

Digitized by Google

Or should a heart its tale reveal
Of hidden joy or woe;—
What is there that a heart can feel,
But his must better know?

Forbear a further plea to bring,
Since taste and truth agree,
That none can touch the sacred string,
With truth and taste, but he.

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TO A FRIEND.

SWEET Jessamine, long may thy elegant flower
Breathe fragrance and solace for me;
And long thy green sprays overshadow the bower
Devoted to friendship and thee.

The eye that was dazzled where lilies and roses
Their brilliant assemblage displayed,
With grateful delight on thy verdure reposes,
— A tranquil and delicate shade.

But ah what dejection that foliage expresses,
Which pensively droops on her breast!
The dew of the evening has laden her tresses,
And stands like a tear on her crest.

Digitized by Google

I'll watch by thy side through the gloom of the night,
Impatient till morning appears:
No charm can awaken this heart to delight,
My Jessmine, while thou art in tears.

But soon will the shadows of night be withdrawn,
Which ever in mercy are given;
And thou shalt be cheered by the light of the morn,
And fanned by the breezes of Heaven.

And still may thy tranquil and delicate shade
Yield fragrance and solace to me;
For though all the flowers in my garden should fade,
My heart will repose upon thee.

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TO THE SAME, ON HER BIRTH DAY,

APRIL 16TH.

With garlands of primroses crowned,
And smiling through eloquent tears—
Her violet springing around,
Sweet April returning appears:
Though showers have darkened her changeable sky
To me she is fairer than blooming July.

For sparkling with sunbeams I see,
In April's fair retinue here,
What still is accounted by me
The loveliest day in the year:
And soft gratulations shall ever ascend,
To welcome the morning that gave me a friend.

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But what to that morning I owe,
Which dawned on my infantile state—
What blessings it came to bestow—
What light it has shed on my fate—
What sweet it has yielded, what balm for distress;
I ask not the language of song to express.

Hope, joy, consolation and peace,
That day on my infancy beamed:
My smiles bade it welcome—and these,
Prophetic of happiness seemed:
And might not the tears which unconsciously fell,
Possess a significant meaning as well!

Oh friend of my bosom! I stray
Through life's chequered vallies with thee:
If clouds ever darken thy way,
Their shadows must fall upon me:
While stars that illumine thy pilgrimage, shine,
With beams of encouraging mercy on mine.

Digitized by Google

Then whether it enter arrayed
In all the fair colours of spring,
Or wrapped in as hoary a shade
As winterly tempests can bring,
This day to my heart will for ever appear
The brightest, the loveliest day in the year.

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TO THE SAME, ON HER BIRTH DAY.

MUCH wishing, dear Susan, I something could say
Expressive of friendship and joy on this day,
I sent an express, my shy muse to invite,
And waited, in very necessitous plight;
But being on higher employment intent,
A truly discouraging message she sent—
That all application at present were vain,
On account of a certain poetical swain,
Who now has some business to do in her way,
That must be completed by Susan's birth day.
So bowing submissive, with diffidence due,
I determined to try what alone I could do.
But hard was the task;—not a wish could I bend
In the shape of a line with a rhyme at the end.

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And though the north wind has been blowing all day,
Not one single thought has it wafted this way.
I went to the window, since nature's green vest
Some feeling poetic is wont to suggest.
But drear was the prospect that waited me there;
I looked at the trees, but their branches were bare;
And I nearly had given it up in despair,
When a little pale star through the twilight that shone,
Smiled kindly upon me, and bid me go on.
" But tell me, sweet star, will thy beams as they play,
Inspire my dull brain with some fanciful lay?"
'Twas silent—but sparkling and darting its rays,
It seemed to invite and encourage my gaze;
And as I continued its beams to explore,
They brightened and dazzled each moment the more.
Yet it seemed not to shine its own path to adorn,
But to guide the benighted, and cheer the forlorn.
My Susan! but no—you forbid me the rest;
Yet suffer the wish that escapes from my breast;
O may the bright beams that thy virtues display,
Direct my dark steps through the shadowy way.

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TO TWO CHESNUT TREES.

WHO will deny but there may be
Much inspiration in a tree?
Since Cowper's harp so sweetly spoke,
Fanned by the breeze of Yardly Oak.
Encouraged thus, my own I hung
Your darkly shadowed boughs among;
Thinking perchance some passing gale
Might tell affection's simple tale.

But why should fancy—used to stray
Where sheds the sun his golden ray
On cultured plains, and vallies gay,
Or idly sport her transient hour,
In magic grot, or rosy bower—
Why should she fly such scenes as these,
To hover near two modest trees,

Digitized by Google

Whose only office is to wait
As centinels to guard the gate?

Is it because your branches high,
Relieved against the pearly sky,
Seem giant forms in Fancy's eye,
When evening lets her shadows fall,
And shrouds you in her sable pall?

Is it because the moon beam rests
So sweetly on your modest crests?
Is it because your foliage played
In varied forms of light and shade?
Had ye no other charms than these,
Ye would not be her favourite trees;
For many a fairer have I seen,
Of richer foliage, statelier mien,
That well might claim eulogium each—
The Oak, the Elm, and graceful Beech:

Digitized by Google

And let them richer, nobler be,
They are not half so dear to me.

Where Fancy most delights to stray,
Affection always leads the way,
Regardless if the favourite spot
Can boast exterior charm or not;
For love bestows a secret grace
On every object, every place:
E'en were it desolate and bare,
She finds a blooming Eden there;
Quickly each hidden grace can see,
And gives enchantment to a tree.

Then well may Fancy love to stray
Where thousand graces court her stay;
Where ye in friendly union stand,
Like loving sisters, hand in hand,
Presiding o'er enchanted land.

Digitized by Google

Long may your spreading branches meet,
The guardians of that loved retreat,
Where many a tender floweret blooms,
Embosomed by your waving plumes:
And Fancy still, by love conveyed,
Shall fondly linger in your shade.

Digitized by Google

TO A SISTER,

ON HER BIRTH DAY, JANUARY 30, 1809.

My sister, companion, and friend,
The guide of my devious way,
May a song of affection attend
The return of this festival day!
We are friends by the earliest choice—
Our union in childhood began—
And still we can weep, or rejoice,
In unison only, my Ann.

While many in solitude walk,
Together we travel along;
Or hang like twin buds on a stalk,
(We may call ourselves flowers in song.)

Digitized by Google

The showers that kindly descend,
Have nourished us both as they passed;
And together we shiver and bend,
Assailed by the winterly blast.

But the blast, and the storm, and the shower,
Have still been commissioned to spare;
Though fatal to many a flower,
That grew in a gayer parterre:
And spreading sweet fragrancy wide,
You flourish in verdure arrayed,
While, blighted and pale, at your side,
I hang down my head in the shade.

My Ann, you had taken the lyre;
And I, from the pattern you set,
Attempted the art to acquire,
And often we played a duet:

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But those who in grateful return,
Have said they were pleased with the lay,
The discord could always discern;
And yet I continued to play.

The garland the Muses have wrought,
Your temples, my Ann, to entwine,
A few of the tendrils have caught,
And so they appear upon mine:
But even the evergreens fade,
And droop on my forehead, you see;
The wreath rather serves as a shade;
'Tis not ornamental to me.

But let every sigh be repressed,
Since mutual our pleasures must be;—
The ivy that clings to its breast
Is reckoned a part of the tree.

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And oh! may we never divide,
Till closed is this turbulent day!
Should I lose you, my sister and guide,
How dreary the rest of the way!

The friends of our earliest years,
(The gayest that ever we knew)
Alone, in this valley of tears,
Have left us our way to pursue;—
But let these complainings subside,
For blessings I cannot recal;
My Ann travels still by my side,
And she is far dearer than all.

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THE VIOLET TO THE ROSE.

ENCLOSED in the shade of a forest profound,
Where silence and solitude reign,
In colours diversified, scattered around,
A little wild hamlet of flowers was found,
The peasants of Flora's domain.

There blue-bells, and daisies, and primroses grew,
From tumult and vanity far:
Their pleasures were simple—their wishes were few,
They sipped every morning fresh draughts of the dew,
And slept with the evening star.

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Amid the wild group, in this peaceful recess,
A Violet peeped from the earth;
But lately indeed she had altered her dress;
And some in the hamlet had reason to guess,
She was but a cowslip by birth.

While they with the breezes at play might be seen,
Refusing to join in the sport,
She sighed for the garden where Rosa was queen,
And despised her pale crest, and her trappings of green,
When she heard of the splendours at court.

And often at night the disconsolate maid
Lamented, by others unseen;
Till a fairy from court who frequented the glade,
Overheard the complaint that poor Violet made,
And told it again to the queen.

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Kind Rosa was melted:—"My fairy," said she,
"Again you must hasten away,
For none of my subjects unhappy shall be;
So bear this encouraging message from me,
To make my poor Violet gay.

"Go tell her, assured of our royal support,
No longer in sorrow to bend;
Entreat her to smile and to join in their sport,
For that *blue* is a favourite colour at court,
And Rosa the queen, is her friend."

Away on a moonbeam, her message to tell,
The tiny ambassadress sped:
'Twas night when she reached little Violet's dell,
But each nodding rustic unfolded his bell,
To hear what Queen Rosa had said.

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The Violet trembled such honours to share,
And blushed for her folly and pride;
Yet pleased that a queen so enchantingly fair
Should deign for a poor simple peasant to care,
She thus to the fairy replied:—

"Return gentle spirit—for Rosa will own
The tear that from gratitude flows;
And tell her that here, in her hamlet alone,
Violetta will study, unseen and unknown,
Those virtues that sweetly embellish the throne,
And love her fair sovereign—the Rose."

1809.

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BIRTH-DAY RETROSPECT.

THUS far life's little journey through,
Of scenes for ever gone
I'll take one retrospective view,
Before I speed me on.

Here, on this little hillock placed,
A moment let me stand—
Before me lies a desert waste;
Behind, a fairy land.

Winding through yon luxuriant vale,
Half hid in distance grey,
By many a hill and many a dale
I trace my youthful way.

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But fast those fading scenes retire,
And mingle into one;
Though here a cot, and there a spire,
Still glitter in the sun.

And when athwart my wintry sky
He darts his latest gleam,
Those spots, till closed is memory's eye,
Will sparkle in his beam.

Yes; happy was my youthful day;
I trod enchanted ground;
My spring, like other springs, was gay,
And roses bloomed around:

And now, though flying o'er my head
Are youth's departing years,
And often though the path I tread
Is watered by my tears;—

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Still hope, in many a gloomy hour,
Through many a weary mile,
Has cheered me with the magic power
Of her bewitching smile.

But hope, farewell!—thy visions bright
Have dazzled me too long;
And shall I stay to watch thy flight,
And hear thy parting song?

No: let me turn—it is enough—
Too many tears have flowed:
The sky is dark, the way is rough;—
But 'tis the pilgrim's road:

And pilgrim-like, with staff and shell,
And clothed in habit grey,
I bid the smiling past farewell,
And speed me on my way.

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But wherefore should my courage fail,
And strains of sorrow flow?
Why need I through this gloomy vale
A lonely wanderer go?

I see a little cheerful band;
I hear their songs resound;—
Onward they travel, hand in hand;
And all for Zion bound.

The sterile plain, the desert drear,
Where howls the chilling blast—
The pains and perils that I fear—
Already they have past.

And kindly would they welcome me:
They bid me not despond;
For they a fairer land can see,
And brighter skies beyond.—

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O then, though fainting and distressed
I will my way pursue:
There is a home, there is a rest,
There is a heaven in view.

September 22, 1809.

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TO A BROTHER,

ON HIS BIRTH DAY.

DEAR brother, while weaving your birth-day address,
I cannot but wish you were here;
For what the true feeling of love can express,
So well as a smile and a tear?

The tear, should it fall on the track of my pen,
May wash its effusions away:—
The smile—give me credit till *Christmas*, for then
I know I can promise to pay.

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And why should I try in a song to enclose
What never in language was dressed?
Away with the Muse, when the heart overflows,
For silence expresses it best.

A sister's affection, the hope and the fear
That flutter by turns in her heart,
When a brother sets out on his stormy career,
What magic of words can impart?

Then why any more of such rhyming as this,
At which all the critics might laugh?
Ah why, when a smile, and a tear, and a kiss,
Would tell it you better by half?

October 9, 1809.

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TO MISS E. F.

ON HER BIRTH DAY.

HAIL, dearest Eliza! and hail to the morn
That smiled on your infantile charms:
Ah! were I not fettered at distance forlorn,
I would tell all my joy in your arms.

If, true to affection, some child of the grove
Would lend me her pinion awhile,
How gladly I'd fly, with the swiftness of love,
Exchanging my song for a smile!

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Though if any mortal those heavenly things
With beings angelic might share,
Eliza had surely been furnished with wings,
To bear her light form on the air.

But seeing the Fates, to our friendship averse,
Such intercourse ever delay,
Permit me, my love, in affectionate verse,
To greet the return of the day.

And since I no train of kind genii can boast,
On errands of friendship to soar,
I send a rude sprite, in the form of the post,
To knock with my song at your door.

Accept then, my love, from my heart as they flow,
Of wishes the kindest and best;
For thousand sweet pleasures I fain would bestow,
To find an abode in your breast.

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Yet what are the blessings that never have graced,
Eliza, thy favoured abode?
Not virtue, or beauty, refinement, or taste,
No: these are already bestowed.

But sorrow too often that bosom invites
Which soonest and longest will bleed;
And sickness, the epicure, chiefly delights
On lilies and roses to feed.

Yet still she can smile and rejoice on her way!
Though sorrow and suffering begin;
They cause the fair casket to fade and decay,
But brighten the jewel within.

Till, freed from a dwelling of darkness and woe,
This gem from its prison shall rise,
All brilliant with glory for ever to glow,
A sun in unchangeable skies.

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Then, might my dim star with a tremulous ray
Ascend to that heavenly sphere,
That friendship shall flourish which lightens the way
Of my wearisome pilgrimage here.

January 15, 1808.

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TO MR. C— SENIOR,

WITH A DRAWING.

My harp, though out of tune so long,
May yield a simple strain:
I will not aim at lofty song,
Well knowing that were vain.

And will you not the tribute own:
The simple numbers hear?
May not affection's gentle tone
Be soothing to your ear?

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And may I hope the unpolished thought
Your goodness will excuse?
Though surely ne'er for favour sought
A less aspiring Muse.

Not born Parnassus' heights to hail,
She shuns the lofty place;
And only owns a lowly vale,
Embosomed at its base.

She never soared on Fancy's wing,
Nor learned poetic art;
Nor knew she e'er to touch a string,
But those that twine the heart.

Will you the humble traveller scorn,
And mock her low estate?
Behold! all trembling, and forlorn,
She lingers at your gate.

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But ah! of favour she despairs,
And prays no more to roam;—
Then take the offering that she bears,
And send her blushing home.

November, 1807.

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TO THE SAME.

Ah! say not, dear sir, that poetical pleasures,
The voice of the Muse, shall invite you in vain;
For soothing and sweet were your musical measures:
We linger, still hoping to hear them again.

To strains so pathetic, so plaintive, to listen,
Is pleasure delightfully tempered with pain:
And while the sly tear for a moment will glisten,
It seems to invite the soft music again.

Though life's pelting storms and its pitiless billows
Have oft beat around you in murmurs of pain,
Oh! hang not desponding your harp on the willows,
But strike its sweet chords, and delight us again.

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The lark, the gay carols of morning expresses;
But if we have heard Philomela complain,
We hasten, more pleased, to her shady recesses,
And sigh for the evening to hear her again.

Then say not the years and the cares that surround you
Can dissipate Poesy's fanciful train:
The Muses still *wait*, if they dance not, around you;
Like us they will mourn, till you seek them again.

And though the wild music of youth may be dying,
Or but the faint echo of pleasure remain;
The tones of your harp were so sweetly replying,
That still we would hear it again and again.

August, 1809.

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AN INFANT'S HYMN.

THE moon is very fair and bright,
And also very high:
I think it is a pretty sight
To see it in the sky:
It shone upon me where I lay,
And seemed almost as bright as day.

The stars are very pretty too,
And scattered all about—
At first there seem a very few;
But soon the rest come out:
I'm sure I could not count them all,
They are so very bright and small.

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The sun is brighter still than they:
He blazes in the skies;
I dare not turn my face that way,
Unless I shut my eyes:
Yet when he shines our hearts revive,
And all the trees rejoice and thrive.

God made and keeps them every one,
By his great power and might:
He is more glorious than the sun,
And all the stars of light:
But when we end our mortal race,
The pure in heart shall see his face.

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HYMN,

SUNG BY THE CHILDREN OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THERE is a glorious world of light,
  Above the starry sky;
Where saints departed, clothed in white,
  Adore the Lord most High.

And hark! amid the sacred songs
  Those heavenly voices raise,
Ten thousand, thousand, infant tongues
  Unite, and perfect praise.

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Those are the hymns that we shall know,
If Jesus we obey;
That is the place where we shall go,
If found in Wisdom's way.

This is the joy we ought to seek,
And make our chief concern;
For this we come, from week to week,
To read, and hear, and learn.

Soon will our earthly race be run,
Our mortal frame decay;
Children and teachers, one by one,
Must droop, and pass away.

Great God! impress the serious thought,
This day on every breast;
That both the teachers, and the taught,
May enter to thy rest.

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HYMN FOR CHILDREN.

JESUS, our gentle Shepherd, see
These tender lambs of Zion's fold:
Lo! we are come to follow thee;
Gather and guard us as of old:
While through the desert world we stray,
Preserve us in the narrow way.

Where thy refreshing pastures grow,
Where all thy chosen flock is fed,
Where living waters gently flow,
There may our wandering feet be led:
Direct us towards the heavenly hill;
And bear us in thy bosom still.

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Much do we need thy watchful care,
Through every day and every hour;
For life is set with many a snare,
And Satan wanders to devour:
But we are safe from all alarms,
Within our heavenly Shepherd's arms.

Here in the gospel we are told,
What great compassion was in Thee,
When mothers brought their babes of old—
Poor helpless children, such as we—
E'en to thy tender bosom brought—
And thou didst say—"Forbid them not."

And thus encouraged by thy grace,
To those still open arms we fly;
And though we cannot see thy face,
Yet Thou canst bless us from on high:
For still thy gracious word, we see,
Says—"Suffer them to come to me."

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HYMN,

FOR THE CHILDREN OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

COME let our songs resound
Within these peaceful walls:
The light of knowledge shines around,
And e'en on us it falls.

Through God our Father's care,
Though we deserved it not,
Our lines in pleasant places are,
And goodly is our lot.

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This cheerful morning sun,
That lights our happy plains,
Shines, ere its daily course is run,
Where heathen darkness reigns.

Before the dawn of day
On Britain's favoured isle,
Downward he casts his burning ray
On many a pagan pile.

He saw the savage wild,
Some idol's help implore;
He saw the untaught Indian child
His painted gods adore.

Lord, let thy light, we pray,
On them—on us arise;
For we are foolish, blind as they,
Till Jesus make us wise.

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We learn thy blessed will,
We read thy holy word,
Then may we thy commands fulfil,
Which others never heard.

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SAILOR'S HYMN.

Of old did Jesus condescend
To calm the stormy sea?
Yes, he was then the Sailor's friend;
And such he still would be.

He does but wait to hear us crave,
As they besought him then—
"Master, we perish! come and save,
For we are dying men!"

Not to sustain our mortal breath,
We raise the earnest cry;—
Lord, save our precious souls from death,
And make us fit to die.

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Then blow ye winds! ye surges roar!
'Twill not our souls appal;
Though waves and billows pass us o'er,
And deep to deep should call.

But O! without that blessed hope,
Without a Saviour near,
What desperate courage bears us up!
What madness not to fear!

Jesus, on thee our hopes we cast,
No more thy wrath defy;
This is the anchor, sure and fast,
On which we may rely.

Soon shall the sea give up its dead,
And should our graves be there,
With joy we'll quit our watery bed,
To meet Him in the air.

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"WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE."

What though I cannot break my chain,
Or e'en throw off my load;
The things impossible to men,
Are possible to God.

Who, who shall in thy presence stand,
Or match Omnipotence;—
Unfold the grasp of thy right hand,
And pluck the sinner thence?

Faith to be healed, I fain would have—
O might it now be given!
Thou canst, thou wilt the sinner save,
And make him meet for heaven.

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Bound down with twice ten thousand ties—
Yet let me hear thy call;
My soul with confidence shall rise,
Shall rise, and break through all.

Thou canst o'ercome this heart of mine,
Thou wilt victorious prove;
For everlasting strength is thine,
And everlasting love.

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HYMN.

Come, my fond fluttering heart,
  Come, struggle to be free:
Thou and the world must part,
  However hard it be:
My trembling spirit owns it just,
But cleaves yet closer to the dust.

Ye tempting sweets forbear—
  Ye dearest idols fall:
My love ye must not share;
  Jesus shall have it all:
'Tis bitter pain—'tis cruel smart,
But O! thou must consent, my heart!

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Ye fair enchanting throng,
Ye golden dreams, farewell!
Earth has prevailed too long,
And now I break the spell:
Ye cherished joys of early years!
Jesus, forgive these parting tears.

But must I part with all,
My heart still fondly pleads:
Yes—Dagon's self must fall:—
It beats, it throbs, it bleeds:
Is there no balm in Gilead found
To soothe and heal the smarting wound?

O yes, there is a balm,
A kind physician there,
My fevered mind to calm,
To bid me not despair:
Dear Saviour! help me, set me free,
And I will all resign to thee!

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O may I feel thy worth,
And let no idol dare—
No vanity of earth
With Thee, my Lord, compare:
Now bid all worldly joys depart,
And reign supremely in my heart!

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EPITAPH.

While o'er this dear remain affection weeps,
A voice proclaims—"She is not dead, but sleeps:"
Jesus again descending from the skies
Shall break her slumbers, saying—"Maid arise;"
Then gently lead her to her Father's feet,
With kind command to give her angels' meat.
Assured in hope, we wait the promised hour:
'Tis sown in weakness—it is raised in power.

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ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

With what unknown delight the mother smiled
When this frail treasure in her arms she pressed!
Her prayer was heard—she clasped a living child;
—But how the gift transcends the poor request!
A child was all she asked, with many a vow;—
Mother—Behold the child an angel now!

Now in her Father's house she finds a place;
Or if to earth she take a transient flight,
'Tis to fulfil the purpose of his grace,
To guide thy footsteps to the world of light;—
A ministering spirit sent to thee,
That where she is, there thou mayst also be.

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ON VISITING AN OLD FAMILY RESIDENCE.

Let pensive memory trace her wonted round
In these familiar walks;—'tis fairy ground:
Still to her view upheld in bright array,
Birds in the bowers, and roses ever gay.
Let grateful thought with deeper musings roam
Through each loved haunt of this deserted home.
Long from the social altar, year by year,
The patriarch's prayer went up accepted here,
And lo! in answer to the faithful call,
On children's children showers of blessings fall.
Embowered retreat! how fair to christians' eyes:
Sure 'twas heaven's gate! a nursery for the skies!

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TRITE THOUGHTS IN A PLACE OF WORSHIP.

THESE courts how amiable! 'tis sweet
To spend the day of rest,
Where minds in pure communion meet,
(Though but a stranger guest;)
Where peace and love their hearts expand,
And friendship's holy flame is fanned.

When clouds of fragrant incense rise,
(The prayer of hearts sincere)
When hymns of praise address the skies,
'Tis pleasant to be here!
But while my soul the influence feels,
A vision o'er my fancy steals.

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I hear the rush of noiseless wings,
A viewless form descry;
The keys of death and hell he brings,
Commissioned from on high:
The walls with solemn airs resound,
And sable banners wave around.

Angel of death!—with pallid shroud
O'er his high stature spread,
He moves amid the unconscious crowd,
With slow and silent tread;
Marks who shall first, and latest fall;
But drops the mantle over all.

May none escape—the chosen few,
That friendship fain would spare?
Nay, death hath oft his favourites too,
And O, his taste is rare!
The crowd he often passes by—
To fix on *such* his hollow eye.

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That head in hoary honours dressed—
A pillar in his place—
That blooming pair whom love has blessed
With such peculiar grace—
These youths and maids—a fair array;
And does he beckon *these* away?

There is a voice, familiar now,
And soon must this be hushed?
And must that high and thoughtful brow
By death's rude hand be crushed?
Beneath these stones that head shall hide,
With one to slumber at his side.

An age rolls on—in Fancy's eye
I see the distant day;
Strangers these vacant seats supply—
Our fathers, where are they?
The faithful marble does but tell,
They served their generation well.

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The vision fades;—but others rise,
Too bright for mortal gaze;—
A vista opens in the skies—
'Tis but a moment's blaze,
And straight the wondrous scene departs;
For still the vail is on our hearts.

Hull, 1821.

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SOLILOQUY.

HERE'S a beautiful earth, and a wonderful sky,
And to see them God gives us a heart and an eye;
Nor leaves us untouched by the pleasures they yield,
Like the fowl of the heaven, or the beasts of the field.

The soul though encumbered with sense and with sin,
Can range through her own mystic chambers within;
Then soar like the eagle, to regions of light,
And dart wondrous thoughts to the stars of the night.

Yea more, it is gifted with vision so keen
As to know the unknown, and to see the unseen;
To glance at eternity's numberless days,
Till dazzled, confounded, and lost in the maze.

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Nor this will suffice it ;—O wonderful germ
Of infinite blessing vouchsafed to a worm !
It quickens, it rises with boundless desires,
And heaven is the lowest to which it aspires.

Such, such is the soul, though bewildered and dark;
A vital, etherial, unquenchable spark:
Thus onward and upward by nature it tends ;—
Then wherefore descends it? ah! whither descends?

Soon droops its light pinion, borne down by a gust,
It flutters, it faulters ;—it cleaves to the dust;
Then feeds upon ashes—deceived and astray;
And fastens and clings to the perishing clay.

For robes that too proud were the lilies to wear—
For food we divide with the fowls of the air—
For joy that just sparkles, and then disappears—
We drop from heaven's gate, to this valley of tears.

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How tranquil and blameless the pleasures it sought,
While it rested within the calm region of thought!
How fraught with disgust, and how sullied with woe,
Is all that detains and beguiles it below!

O Thou, who when silent and senseless it lay,
Didst breathe into life the inanimate clay,
Now nourish and quicken the languishing fire,
And fan to a flame that shall never expire!

1823.

Digitized by Google

"THE THINGS THAT ARE UNSEEN ARE ETERNAL."

THERE is a state unknown, unseen,
Where parted souls must be;
And but a step may be between
That world of souls and me.

The friend I loved has thither fled,
With whom I sojourned here:
I see no sight—I hear no tread;
But may she not be near?

I see no light—I hear no sound,
When midnight shades are spread;
Yet angels pitch their tents around,
And guard my quiet bed.

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Jesus was rapt from mortal gaze,
And clouds conveyed him hence;
Enthroned amid the sapphire blaze,
Beyond our feeble sense.—

Yet say not—who shall mount on high,
To bring him from above?
For lo! the Lord is always nigh
The children of his love.

The Saviour whom I long have sought,
And would, but cannot see—
And is he here? O wondrous thought!
And will he dwell with me?

I ask not with my mortal eye
To view the vision bright;
I dare not see Thee, lest I die;
Yet Lord, restore my sight!

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Give me to see Thee, and to feel—
The mental vision clear;
The things unseen reveal! reveal!
And let me know them near.

I seek not fancy's glittering height,
That charmed my ardent youth;
But in thy light would see the light,
And learn thy perfect truth.

The gathering clouds of sense dispel,
That wrap my soul around;
In heavenly places make me dwell,
While treading earthly ground.

Illume this shadowy scul of mine,
That still in darkness lies;
O let the light in darkness shine,
And bid the day-star rise!

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Impart the faith that soars on high,
Beyond this earthly strife,
That holds sweet converse with the sky,
And lives Eternal Life!

1823.

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

CORRESPONDENCE.

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TO MISS S. L. C.

Colchester, December 20, 1805.

MY DEAR L.

IF four or five years ago you had suffered so long a chasm to be made in our correspondence, I should doubtless have indulged in some such painful soliloquy as you have prepared for me; or perhaps in a yet more touching and plaintive strain. But now, enjoying all the sober rationality of mature age—now, having happily past that wild and fanciful season, by some denominated the "*silly age*"—or, at least, being a degree or two more rational than I was then, I feel far more disposed to attribute the long intervals to which every correspondence is liable, to some of those thousand nameless hinderances which every day presents, and to that incon-

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venient spirit of procrastination of which most of us more or less partake, than to declining affection, to fickleness, or to affront. Perhaps it may have occurred to you in the course of this long period, which I fear has nearly put you out of breath, that I have been speaking one word for you, and two for myself:—it would be very unfair for you to suppose so; but even should your supposition be just, you will allow that to afford another person one third of a good thing, that might have been all one's own, is no mean proportion. But now it will be making a poor return for all this generosity if you should become more than ever remiss in your communications; and then make yourself easy by thinking that Jane will only impute it to "some nameless hinderance, or an inconvenient spirit of procrastination."

But now for your grave and appropriate question, namely—'What do you think of this famous victory?' To which, after due consideration, I reply—Why pray what do *you* think of it? for I make little doubt that we have thought

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much alike on the subject. Should you however question this, and suppose that my humbler ideas have not stretched to the same height as yours, I will convince you of the contrary, by endeavouring to recal some of the reflections that were inspired by this "famous victory." And first, I thought that—it was a very "famous victory;" did not you?—and besides this, and much more, I thought a great many things that the newspapers had very obligingly thought, ready for me. Well but to speak in a graver strain; and if you are disposed to hear what I have really thought about our late glorious victories;—why read on:—

Now, impressed with the idea that my private opinion could in no way affect the public weal, I have allowed myself to form one, without restraint; well knowing that I might vainly endeavour to pluck one leaf from the hero's laurel, even if I were disposed to do so, which I assure you I am not. For every one who performs his part with zeal and success, claims respect:—and who can deny that Nelson has

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nobly performed his? But tell me is the character of the warrior in itself to be admired? or rather, can it be loved? From what motives does a man at first devote himself to the trade of war? Do you not think it is more often from a desire of glory, than from patriotism? And now, though I have often endeavoured to discover what there is either amiable or generous in the love of *glory*, I have never yet been able to discern it. I cannot tell how or why it is a less selfish principle than the love of riches. Is not he in reality the truest patriot who fills up his station in private life well—he who loves and promotes peace, both public and private, who knowing that his country's prosperity depends much more on its *virtue* than its arms, resolves that his individual endeavours shall not be wanting to promote this desirable end? And is not he the greatest hero who is able to despise public honours for the sake of private usefulness—he who has learned to subdue his own inclinations, to deny himself every gratification inconsistent with virtue and piety, who has conquered his passions, and sub-

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dued his own spirit? surely he is "greater than he that taketh a city"—or a squadron. If the great men of the earth did but act on these principles, our heroes would be sadly at a loss for want of employment; I fear they would be obliged to turn to making plough-shares and pruning hooks.

Now perhaps you will call me an ungrateful creature; but really I think I am not so. Though, certainly, I have not joined without some secret misgivings of heart in the unqualified plaudits that have sounded from all quarters. If so many brave men *must* be sacrificed, I heartily rejoice that the dear bought victory was ours. But how is it possible, while we regard them not merely as the machines of war, but as immortal beings, to rejoice without sorrow and dismay in the result of the rencontre? * * * *

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TO THE SAME.

Colchester, February 12, 1806.

* * * In truth Jane Taylor of the morning, and Jane Taylor of the evening, are as different people, in their feelings and sentiments, as two such *intimate* friends can possibly be. The former is an active handy little body, who can make beds or do plain work; and now and then takes a fancy for drawing, &c. But the last mentioned lady never troubles her head with these menial affairs;—nothing will suit her but the *pen*; and though she does nothing very extraordinary in this way, yet she so far surpasses the first-named gentlewoman, that any one who had ever received a letter from both, would immediately distinguish between the two, by the difference of the style. But to drop this ingenious allegory, I assure you it

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represents the truth, and I am pretty well determined not again to attempt letter writing before breakfast. For really I am a mere machine—the most stupid and dronish creature you can imagine, at this time. The unsentimental realities of breakfast may claim some merit in restoring my mental faculties; but its effects are far surpassed by the evening's tea:—After that comfortable, social, invigorating meal, I am myself, and begin to think the world a pleasanter place, and my friends more agreeable people, and (entre nous) myself a much more respectable personage, than they have seemed during the day: so that by eight o'clock, I am just worked up to a proper state of mind for writing. If you are liable to these changing frames, you will not only excuse and feel for me, but heartily acquiesce in my resolution of now putting down the pen till the *evening*.

It is now indeed evening; and several days have passed since I wrote the foregoing; and I do assure you that nothing but the fear of being unable to fill another sheet in time for my father's

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departure, should prevail with me to send you so much nonsense: I often reproach myself for writing such trifling letters; but it is so *easy* to trifle, and so hard to write what may be worth reading, that it is a sad temptation not to attempt it. * * * .

TO THE SAME.

Colchester, May 8, 1806.

MY DEAR L.

I HAVE just been taking a solitary turn round our pretty garden, on this most lovely evening; and glad should I have been to have enjoyed it in company with my dear L. But as this was a fruitless wish, I thought I could do nothing better than return to my desk, and spend an hour

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with you in this way. Ann and a young friend who is come to stay with us while father and mother are absent, are going to enjoy this serene sky abroad; but I have determined to forbear that pleasure, for the sake of enjoying even this imperfect intercourse with you.

My dear L. much as I love London for the friends it contains, I think my delight in country scenery increases every year; and while I occasionally cast a wistful look towards places where I feel a *heart* interest—feeling as if imprisoned in this uncongenial spot; yet, when I contrast smoke, and noise, and darkness, with the smiling landscape, and the clear sky, and all the beauties of a country walk, which is here always within reach, I forget my privations of other kinds, and acknowledge that "the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places." I doubt not that, if I live, the time will come when I shall look back to our social evening walks here with rapture—or perhaps, with agony! I am sure I shall never know happier days than these; though now indeed I am not without my anxieties; but oh! how much

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deeper anxieties may I have to encounter! When I look without, and observe the portion of affliction which is distributed to others, and more especially when I look within, and see the mass of vanity and worldly-mindedness which perhaps can be dispelled only by affliction, I assure you I trem ble: and while I look around on my many, many comforts—not, I hope, without an emotion of thankfulness, I feel the wisdom of enjoying them *now*:—one link broken in the dear family chain, and the happiness I now enjoy could, I think, never be entirely restored; and oh, how soon may it be snapped! What a wide field for anxiety and distress is a large family, to every member of which one's happiness seems to cling. Yet we know they are but "short comforts borrowed now, to be repaid anon." In this light I would ever desire to regard them with a feeling of grateful pleasure as to the present, and of cheerful resignation for the future.

I feel much gratified, my dear L. by the many expressions of affection contained in your last letter: this is the sweetest music I can listen

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to. The voice of affection is distinct from that of flattery; and I hope the former will ever be more delightful to me than the latter. To merit the esteem of the few individuals whose esteem I believe myself to enjoy, is my constant wish, and almost my highest ambition. I do not know why I have said *almost;* for I know nothing more desirable—nothing which could make me more truly happy.

TO THE SAME.

Colchester, September 24, 1806.

Good morning to you, my dear L. But if you are, as I conjecture, enjoying the last grateful slumber, believe me, I intend not to disturb you;

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though I own it seems a little hard that I should be employed so early (for it is only half past seven) for your amusement and instruction. And moreover, that I may have all the praise that belongs to me, permit me to assure you that I have been up this hour, or more; and have done a great deal of business, while you, perhaps, have only been struggling with an obstinate dream, that at last has left you, with all its delusions, to awake no wiser or happier than you were yesterday. If this has been your case, I heartily sympathize with you; for often has my evil genius thus tormented me; though, in truth, I have no great right to complain of him; since I must allow that, in my waking dreams, I have not unfrequently practised the same species of torture upon myself.

But to be serious, my dear L. I do believe that this habit of *castle building* is very injurious to the mind. I know I have sometimes lived so much in a *castle*, as almost to forget that I lived in a *house;* and while I have been carefully arranging *aerial* matters *there*, have left all my

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solid business in disorder *here*. To be perpetually fancying what *might be*, makes us forget what we really are; and while conjuring up what we might have, we are negligent of what we really possess. You will perceive I am recollecting *youthful* follies:—do not suppose, I beseech you, that I *now* indulge in these childish reveries. At *my age*, you know, I go soberly on, doing my proper business in its regular routine.—Will you believe that I ever suffer my thoughts to wander from the employment of my hands? If, for example, I am making tea —I think about the tea, the tea-pot, the water, the sugar, the cream, the bread, the butter, and the plate, all in regular succession:—then of the company, when it is proper to make the customary inquiries;—and think you, at any other times? In short, I am now a discreet personage, having left all the follies of sixteen far in the back ground.

If you remembered Eliza S. in health, you were, I dare say, much shocked by the alteration. Poor Letitia is also on her journey; whether she

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will ever reach Exeter is doubtful: if she do, I fear she will survive her arrival a very short time. You are now witnessing the progress of this complaint in your cousin. Let us hear continually, when you write, how she is. Eliza and Letitia make six of our immediate friends whom we have attended in this disorder! besides many others not so near to us, who have gone in the same way. That I, who am certainly delicate, have stood so long, and under many disadvantages, is more than might have been expected; and I hope excites thankfulness. I have for some time felt as if waiting for my turn. To hear only that any of my friends has a cough, alarms me now; and I look round upon them all with an anxious eye—which of them am I next to lose? * * *

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TO MISS E. F.

Colchester, December 6, 1800.

* * * AND now will you allow me to call in question the accuracy and justice of some of your opinions, though formed, as you assure me, on the accumulated experience of "three score years and ten."—I will not accuse you of doing the world injustice, for even the peep I have had at it convinces me it is, as you say, "deceit and wickedness;" but surely there are *some* honest souls—some who are disinterested, open hearted, and affectionate;—at least if it is not so—if those whom I have long thought it my greatest happiness to love, and whom my unbiassed judgment has taught me to respect and venerate—I ought rather to suspect and to fear—I do not wish to

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be undeceived; I would rather be imposed upon ever so often, than endure the torture of a constant state of suspicion and jealousy.—Yes, my dear E. you must not deprive me of the pleasure of believing I have a real share in your affections;—you must still allow me to think of you as a *friend*, without indulging a fear that you will violate the sacred title. The best use, I think, that we can make of the many instances of duplicity and insincerity which every day brings before our view, is to learn thereby to suspect ourselves;—here, indeed, we cannot be too watchful, or too accurate in our examinations;—but alas! how much easier is it to decide upon the conduct and motives of others, than to weigh and analyze our own! and what abundant cause have we for deep humiliation, when we arrive at the springs of most of our best performances.

The result of such reflections as these I have found very satisfactory and decisive: I find that it is quite in vain to attempt to perform any action, to think any thought, or to cultivate any amiable sentiment aright, unless it be done with a view

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to the glory of God, and with a humble dependance on his supporting hand; this important truth every day brings with fresh conviction to my mind.—I have long mourned over my temper, naturally irritable and impatient: I have read of, and I have witnessed examples of uniform sweetness and meekness of temper, which have at once made me blush at my own deficiencies, and stimulated me to those exertions which others have successfully made in conquering their evil propensities;—I have therefore resolved to make a noble stand against the risings of my temper, whatever provocations might occur:—but alas! how feeble were these resolutions!—perhaps they yielded to the very first attack, and the work was all to be done anew. What then was to be done: must I give all over; and suffer my ungoverned temper to prevail? No;—but I must first seek assistance from one whose "strength is made perfect in our weakness," who is as able to still the storms of passion, as to say to the raging waves, "Peace, be still:"—I must not hope to be able to resist the temptations to anger or

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fretfulness of one short day, if I have not in the morning of that day, prayed to be enabled to overcome evil. One had better forget to say, "Give us this day our daily bread," than to put up the fervent petition, "Lead me not into temptation."

But this is not all:—He who searches the heart, will not afford me strength to overcome my temper unless he sees a right motive urging me to attempt it: if I wish to be amiable for the same reason that I might wish to be accomplished, or beautiful; that is, that I may be admired, or beloved, or respected;—can I hope for success? O no:—if I be not actuated by a humble desire to obey the commands of God, to follow the bright example of Jesus Christ, by a hatred of all that is sinful, and an ardent desire to be "holy as he is holy," I must still strive and pray in vain. How does this increase the difficulty of the work, and shew the absolute necessity of divine assistance! not that I think a modest wish to please can be sinful; indeed, without it, how can we ever expect to please; but this must

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not be the grand spring of action, unless we would prefer the approbation of our fellow creatures to the favour of God. * * *

TO MISS S. L. C.

Colchester, October 12, 1807.

* * * In the conversation we had together at Nayland, you may remember we lamented the trifling style into which we too often fall in our correspondence. It is undoubtedly a real evil, though a very common one: as in conversation, so in writing, it is easier to *chat* than to converse: it is easier to be *witty* than *wise*. One can fill all sides of a sheet without stopping a moment, in such a way that one is quite ashamed to peruse it when done. If the mind

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is fatigued or in an uncomfortable frame, what a labour it is to *think!* and at such a time one is under a strong temptation to give the pen a full licence—curbing it neither by reason nor conscience; and what a range will it take when thus left to itself! But my dear L. is not this making that useless, or at best a mere diversion, which might be highly beneficial? And is not a similar fault often chargeable upon personal intercourse? So seldom as we meet, and so short as are our interviews, what a pity that they should be trifled away! Whenever we have had a friend with us, I sigh to think that so few of the hours in which we have had their company have been occupied by any thing like improving conversation. For our own parts, I think the fault may, in great measure, be traced to our taste for *drollery*. I have frequently regarded this propensity as a misfortune: especially as it is so rarely overcome. I am sure, my dear L. you have seen enough of it, and of its consequences, to make you think very much as I do on this subject. Does not a jest frequently put a stop to an interesting con-

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versation, or dissipate a train of useful reflections? And do not droll turns of expression, or humourous associations, occasionally interfere even with our most serious engagements? Have not these ideas frequently occurred to you? But to what does all this tend? Why I hope to an endeavour towards reformation:—at any rate I will try this time to write a letter without trifling.

In your last letter you just introduced the subject which ought to be more interesting to us than any other. It is strange indeed that those who are united in the bonds of friendship—as I hope, my dear L. we are, and ever shall be—and who profess to be journeying together on the same pilgrimage, towards the same happy home, should so rarely exchange a word relative to the difficulties and the dangers of the way, and to the hope of future rest. It is strange; yet it is what we see every day. That unfortunate reserve which closes the lips of so many people on the subject of religion—Whence does it proceed? What other subject is there, however delicate, but what is sometimes introduced? But here our lips are

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sealed. I believe we do ourselves a great injury by indulging this temper. For my own part, though I believe few people feel this reluctance more powerfully than I have done, it has not been the cause of my silence so often as the discouraging or uncomfortable state of my mind. Oh could we but *feel* as much as we *know* of the importance and excellency of religion—could we but retain a just impression of the vanity of even the most important of our earthly pursuits, how different would be our manners and our conduct! But seeing things as we do, only through the medium of our beclouded senses, every object is distorted or reversed.

I have lately been reading Dr. Watts's discourses on the happiness of separate spirits; it is impossible to peruse them without feeling an elevation of mind, above the trifles of earth—without being inspired by the desire "to see and taste the bliss:"—but oh, how soon is the mind sensualized again—even before one fleeting hour is passed! How does the world flow in upon it again, after it has been for a while abstracted! * * *

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TO MISS E. F.

Colchester, 1807.

* * * In your last you again introduce the subject of worldly amusements; and if I am not mistaken, this is neither the first nor the second time you have done so: and that in an argumentative style, as though our opinions were at variance. Now I really apprehend that we think as nearly alike on these points as one could reasonably wish; and I think if you were to examine some of my former letters, in which the subject has been discussed, you would find I acquiesce with you, at least in your most important objections. I cannot think what has given you the idea so strongly, that I am an advocate for the pleasures of the theatre; unless it be, my having been persuaded, five years ago, to attend it one

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evening:—and though, certainly, I am not aware of having sustained any material injury, either to my moral or spiritual feelings, I have ever since decidedly resolved never to repeat the visit: and I hope you will believe me when I once again assure you that I do disapprove of such amusements; and should think it very dangerous, and exceedingly wrong to be in the habit of frequenting them. You mention novels:—you have read one or two here; and may conclude we are in the continual habit of perusing them. I believe in all my life I have read, and heard read, about a dozen—it may be twenty:—and though I think it injudicious to suffer very young girls to read even a good novel, if there be love in it, yet I must maintain the opinion that most, or many of those I have read were of a beneficial, and not of a hurtful tendency. I would as soon read some of Miss Edgeworth's or Miss Hamilton's novels, with a view to moral improvement, as Foster's Essays; and I have too high an opinion of your good sense and liberality, to suppose that, after a candid perusal of these, and some few other good

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novels (for the number of good ones I readily allow to be very small) you would repeat that, "to read them was incompatible with love to God." You oblige me to recur to a hacknied argument, that the abuse of a thing should not set aside its use.

Do not say I am pleading for an indiscriminate indulgence in novel reading; or a *frequent* perusal of the very best of novels:—that, in common with every innocent recreation, may be easily carried to a hurtful excess: but you seem to me to fancy some fatal spell to attend the very name of *novel*, in a way that we should smile at, as narrow-minded and ignorant, in an uneducated person: all I wish you to admit—all I think myself is, that it is a possible thing for a book to be written, bearing the general form, appearance, and name of a *novel*, in the cause of virtue, morality, and religion;—and then, that to read such a book is by no means "incompatible with love to God," or in the least displeasing in his sight. I think you will not hesitate to admit this; and then we exactly agree in our opinions of "plays and novels."

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That plays, and bad novels, are "poisons which Satan frequently insinuates" with too great success, I have no more doubt of than yourself. Yet, if I am not mistaken, he has some still more potent venoms;—if I might judge from myself, there are ways, in the most private life, in domestic scenes, in solitary retirements, by which Satan can as effectually operate on the heart, as in a crowded theatre. I believe I might read a hundred novels, and attend as many plays, and have my heart less drawn from God, than by those common pursuits and interests which, while it would be sinful to avoid them, I cannot engage in without sin. It is in the realities of life, and not merely in the fictions that occasionally amuse us, that I find the most baneful poisons, the most effectual weaners from "love to God."

I think many people "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel," in these very circumstances; and Satan willingly suffers them to abstain, with holy horror from the theatre, or to throw aside a novel with abhorrence—so the idol, the real idol

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he has erected in their hearts, receive its daily worship. You cannot suppose I am bringing this forward by way of argument, for the one or the other; but it always appears to me that people begin at the wrong end, when they attack such errors as these. One might as well expect to demolish a building by pulling down some external ornament, while the pillars were left unmoved: and I think many who exclaim with vehemence against those who indulge in some of the vain pleasures of the world, (for which probably themselves have no relish, and from which, therefore, it costs them little self denial to abstain,) would do well to examine if there be not some favourite idol within their own breasts, equally displeasing in the sight of a heart searching God. I do not say this to you, dear E. I know you watch your heart, as well as your conduct; and earnestly desire to guard it in every quarter from the incursions of the wily adversary; and while you have abundant occasion to warn me of that worldly-mindedness which I desire daily to mourn over and to mortify, I hope your anxiety for me, "as

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one who reads novels, and tolerates the frequenting of plays," will be abated, at least. I will discuss the subject with you as often as you please; but do not again employ your time in arguing me out of opinions which I ever discarded. * * *

TO MISS M. H.

Colchester, December 18, 1807.

It would be to me a most delightful and gratifying task to address you, my dear M. on this occasion, did I believe it to be in my power to speak to your deeply wounded spirit the language of real consolation; but I feel forcibly the insignificance and inefficacy of empty words, in a case of such sad reality; and I own the task would be

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only painful, were I not fulfilling your kind request.

If it be consolatory to be persuaded that we do not mourn alone and disregarded; but that in our tears and sorrows we have the deep sympathy of a friend, then indeed, my dear M. you may receive all the consolation such a persuasion can bestow. To a mind so well stored as yours, with religious principles, and so well regulated by them, it would be superfluous to enumerate those sources of comfort which the word of God presents to the mourning Christian. Nor would it, indeed, become me, being sensible how far I fall short of your attainments in this respect: and I am very sure you are daily receiving these lessons of pious resignation from your dear and excellent father. Have you not, dear M. felt something of the "joy of grief," and that too in a better sense than the poet intends, in the feeling of having a new tie to the heavenly world, while one of the strongest cords that bound your soul to this, is broken. Cowper beautifully rejoices in being the son of parents "passed into the skies." It is in-

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deed a most inspiring idea, and those who have a good, well founded hope of the happiness of their departed friends, cannot be inconsolable at the separation. A friend, who has lately lost a beloved brother, in a letter just received from her, says, "We are always happy in the idea that our dear brother is in heaven." This is the privilege of christians—this is indeed a joy that the world knows not of. Oh how can those who are without hope, either for themselves or their friends, support the weight of such a stroke. They are obliged to plunge into gaieties for a refuge from reflection. But how poor a substitute are these for the consolations of religion! * * *

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TO MISS E. F.

Colchester, February 14, 1808.

NOTHING less, my dear E. than your actual presence could, I believe, just now, rouse me from the stupor of a long evening's application. I always grow quite rusty in the winter, and almost forget that the world reaches further than from one end of the house to the other. Not but that my thoughts take an occasional flight to regions more remote; but they stretch so far into the blue distance, that I can scarcely tell whether they arrive at realities, or rest upon vapour and illusion. You who have seen us only in the summer, when we are never so regular in our movements, and with a visitor, can scarcely form an idea of the retirement and uninterrupted regularity of our winter life. We seem more like

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the possessors of some lone castle in the bosom of the mountains, than the inhabitants of a populous town. Yet do not imagine me shewing a deplorable face through the grates of my prison, and longing to break forth into the gay world. I assure you I enjoy this retirement—this peaceful and happy home, where my heart and my happiness are centred. When I look round at the dear and yet unbroken circle, I reproach myself if ever I have indulged a feeling of fretfulness—that the glow of thankfulness should ever forsake my heart. Yet we have troubles and anxieties that will sometimes destroy cheerfulness. But I feel persuaded that however I may feel their pressure now, I shall never know happier days than these. And one advantage I have, which must soon forsake me—I am still young; and feel occasionally that flow of spirits—that bounding joy of heart, that ever attends the spring of life. The spirits may indeed be depressed, but they will rise again; and I have often been surprized to feel, not only cheerfulness, but hilarity returning to my heart from no apparent cause,

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and when circumstances which had plunged me in dejection remain unchanged. * * * * * * * * * *

TO MR. J. C.

Colchester, May 19, 1808.

* * * You still ask me to define a compliment: I thought we had agreed that praise bestowed upon real merit, sanctioned by the honest judgment, and administered temperately, ought not to be termed a *compliment*. Whenever praise exceeds the above mentioned limits, it deserves no better name. Now I fear that unless we have courage to violate the common laws of good breeding, we must all acknowledge ourselves to be faulty in this respect. Indeed it

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seems to depend more upon the character of our associates than upon ourselves, to what degree we offend. I have friends whom I cannot compliment; and I have many acquaintances whom, unless I transgress these laws, I must needs compliment whenever I am in their company. In this view, if I have accused you of such a practice, I am willing to take the blame upon myself. And I will consider myself bound, for your sake as well as my own, better to merit those commendations which neither your politeness could entirely withhold, nor my vanity wholly dispense with. It is difficult to distinguish accurately between an honest desire to please, and that poisonous love of admiration which acts rather as a clog than a stimulus to mental improvement;—to judge between a laudable ambition to excel, and a vain and selfish desire to outshine others. How many mortifications should we escape, if we were always more solicitous to deserve the love of a few valued friends, than to excite general admiration! A proud indifference to the opinion of the world is no amiable

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feeling. But to be independent of its smiles, by valuing chiefly the sweets of inward tranquillity, is indeed a most desirable state of mind—only to be attained by cultivating the best principles, and by seeking approbation from the *highest* source. * * *

TO MISS S. L. C.

Colchester, June 2, 1808.

* * * We have already had some delightful evening rambles. When we are all out together on these happy occasions, I forget all my troubles, and feel as light-hearted as I can remember I used to do some seven or eight years ago, when I scarcely knew what was meant by

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depression. If I should ever lose my relish for these simple pleasures—if I thought by growing older, my feelings would no longer be alive to them, I should be ready indeed to cling to youth, and petition old Time to take a little rest, instead of working so indefatigably, night and day, upon me. But alas! he is such a persevering old fellow, that nothing can hinder him: one must needs admire his industry, even though one may now and then be a little provoked with his obstinacy. But seriously; it is not right to shrink from age, much less from maturity; and could I be sure of retaining some of my present ideas, feelings, and sentiments, and of parting only with those that are vain and childish, I think I could welcome its near approach with a tolerably good grace. But I dread finding a chilling indifference steal gradually upon me, for some of those pursuits and pleasures which have hitherto been most dear to me—an indifference which I think I have observed in some in the meridian of life. I am always therefore delighted to discover, in people of advancing years, any symptoms of their

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being still susceptible of such enjoyments; and in this view the letters of Mrs. Grant afforded me peculiar gratification: increasing years seem to have deprived her of no rational enjoyment. If time clipped a little the wings of her fancy, she was still able to soar above the common pleasures of a mere housewife;—no reflection, by the bye, upon that respectable character; believe me, I reverence it; and always regard with respect a woman who performs her difficult, complicated, and important duties with address and propriety. Yet I see no reason why the best housewife in the world should take more pleasure in making a curious pudding, than in reading a fine poem; or feel a greater pride in setting out an elegant table, than in producing a well trained child. I perfectly glory in the undeniable example Mrs. Grant exhibits of a woman filling up all the duties of her domestic station with peculiar activity and success, and at the same time cultivating the minds of her children usefully and elegantly; and still allowing herself to indulge

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occasionally in the most truly rational of all pleasures—the pleasures of intellect.

I dare say you read a paper in the Christian Observer for April, on Female Cultivation.—I feel grateful to the sensible and liberally minded author. I do believe the reason why so few men, even among the intelligent, wish to encourage the mental cultivation of women, is their excessive love of the *good things* of this life: they tremble for their dear stomachs, concluding that a woman who could taste the pleasures of poetry or sentiment, would never descend to pay due attention to those exquisite flavours in pudding or pie, that are so gratifying to their philosophic palates; and yet, poor gentlemen, it is a thousand pities they should be so much mistaken; for after all, who so much as a woman of sense and cultivation, will feel the real importance of her domestic duties; or who so well, so cheerfully perform them? * * *

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TO MR. J. C.

Colchester, February 21, 1809.

* * * Mr. —— is the principal subject of your last letter. I have felt quite impatient to add my thanks to those Ann has, I believe, already presented, for your truly friendly exertions to introduce us to his notice; for as your interviews were few, and occupied by much more interesting discourse, to remember two obscure country rhymers was very kind; and so we feel it. As to his remarks on our books, they cannot be otherwise than gratifying. We feel all the difference between such an opinion, expressed by a man of taste and genius, and the customary compliment of—"Sweet pretty things, ladies;—they do you great credit;"—&c. I regret he did not leave room to find fault: we are fully con-

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scious that we deserve it. When we first wrote we were not in the habit of taking pains; that is to say, we were not aware what pains are necessary; neither did we know what we had at stake; consequently our earliest productions abound with inaccuracies. Parents are pleased with them, because their children are. But from Mr. ——, who is neither a little boy, nor a father, I had not expected so favourable a critique. But since it would ill become me to question his judgment or taste, the small portion of his praise which I take to my own share, affords me solid satisfaction.

Alas! if a poor wight has ever had the misfortune to hit upon two words that gingle, what a craving appetite is instantly created; and he is perhaps doomed to endure perpetual starvation; or at best to derive a scanty and precarious subsistence from crumbs of praise; though it is as delicious to his palate (and even more so from its rarity) as to that of the favoured bard, who receives it as his daily bread. But while I must confess that I have felt the appetite, I can say

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with sincerity that my happiness does not depend upon dainties of this sort, and that I can live contentedly upon plainer food. I wish to be thankful that I can find enjoyment in simple pleasures, and such as are, as far as I can discover, purified from the dross of selfishness and vanity. I am pleased to look within, and find that I am really happy when our complete family circle is formed; and useful and interesting conversation rises and circulates. Memory can recal many livelier scenes, and fancy could present others still gayer; but neither memory nor fancy can persuade me to be discontented with the present. The loss of every external source of happiness, by the death of our early friends here, forced us to seek it in its native soil:—I loved home; but I knew not how to value and enjoy it; and to the beauties of nature, though blooming around me, I was blind. I am surprised when looking back only a few years, I remember how totally insensible I was to those very scenes which are now constant sources of delight:—though I should have been not a little startled had my taste and

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feeling been questioned;—I, who have spent many a summer evening on the old ivy-grown town wall, reading Thomson to the friend of my bosom; and would often strain my eyes till they ached, that I might read by moonlight. But now, though I confess I prefer the convenience of a commodious apartment, and willingly endure the gross vapours of tallow, and the barbarism of artificial light; yet I flatter myself I know better how to enjoy the glowing landscape, as well as to taste the beauties of the poet; and that I can contemplate the fair face of the moon with sensations not only more rational, but more pleasurable, than in those days of idle romance. That I have an eye to see, and a heart to feel the beauties of nature, I acknowledge with gratitude; because they afford me constant and unsatiating pleasure; and form almost my only recreation. And I indulge the hope that having acquired a love for these simple enjoyments, I shall never lose it; but that in seasons of solitude or of sorrow, I shall continue to find a sweet solace in them. When I am low

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in spirits, weary, or cross; or especially when worried by some of the teazing realities of life, one glance at the landscape from the window of my attic, never fails to produce a salutary effect upon me. And when "'tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more," if moon, planet, or star, condescends to beam through my casement, I revive under its benign influence. Many might smile at this; especially as I have renounced the title of romantic, and claim that of rational, for my pleasures; but I beg you will not. As a Londoner, I might apologize for dwelling so long upon such a theme; but to a poet, I cannot; and though to a correspondent I ought to apologize for so much egotism, to a friend I need not.

The infant smiles of spring have perhaps inspired me with this effusion: its return is always reviving and cheering; and while all around is gay and young, we forget that *our* winter has approached a step nearer. I am sometimes startled when I recollect that very probably half my allotted days are already spent; and possibly

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much more. Years that once appeared such long and tedious periods, now seem to fly onward with such rapidity that they are gone ere they can be enjoyed or improved. Yet a few, at most, of these fleeting seasons, and I, and all I love, shall be forgotten upon earth. You have heard doubtless that we have lost our friend Mrs. ——. Thus we see a family nearly extinct in which, but a few years ago, was centred all that was interesting and dear to us. We have no juvenile recollections with which they are not connected; and the much valued friendships we have formed in later years have not effaced those early impressions. It is difficult to realize such losses. And it is not these alone; for, of a gay and happy circle with whom we were intimately connected, Ann and I are the only survivors. * * *

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TO MISS S. L. C.

Colchester, May 4, 1800.

* * * THIS letter was begun some time ago: many circumstances have prevented my finishing it; and I have been in a state of anxiety about the settlement of ——, which has so much occupied my thoughts that I have not had the heart to resume my pen. His affairs are yet undecided, and we are waiting very anxiously to see what is the will of Providence concerning him. When I remember how kindly our Heavenly Father has hitherto led us on as a family, in credit and comfort, through many struggles, I feel a sweet consolation in committing all our temporal affairs to the same overruling Providence; and hope that my dear brothers, for whose welfare we feel unspeakable solicitude,

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may be guided by that "pillar of cloud and of fire" by which we have been so far directed. Yet again, when I see that many a one, equally deserving, and equally dear to parents and sisters, becomes a prey to misfortune, and encounters nothing in life but neglect and disappointment, then I say, how can I tell but this may be the case with my dear brothers? Dear L. you would pity me if you knew the many tears I have shed with these forebodings. The world is a chilling place; and going from the bosom of an affectionate family, they must feel it so.—But all this is foolish and wrong: I do try cheerfully to commit them to God; and hope to be able to say with some submission, whatever be their fate, "Thy will be done." The separation which now draws so near, I hardly know how to fortify myself to bear:—for though the distance is short, and our interviews may be frequent, yet I must view it as the breaking up of our family, so long and so closely united; and a part of it so dear to us leaving *home*—safe, happy, affectionate *home*, for ever. Excuse me, dear L. my heart is very full

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on this subject, and in writing to a friend I could not avoid it.

Oh, when the mind is weary and heavily laden with these worldly cares, how refreshing is it to look beyond them all to that rest—to those happy, peaceful mansions that are prepared for the people of God. The delightful hope of seeing all my dear family, and all I love below, safely landed there, makes these fears and anxieties fade into insignificance. But oh! what new fears and anxieties arise here! It may be well that our minds are not capable of measuring the vast disproportion between the concerns of this life and those of eternity, or we should not be able to give a sufficient degree of attention to our present duties. Could we view the most important events that can ever occur to us here in the same light as we shall look back upon them from the other world, we should scarcely be able to exert a proper degree of energy in the pursuit or management of them.

I find myself at the end of my last page, without having noticed the contents of your letter;

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but really when a letter has been so long received, one feels ashamed of referring to what can no longer interest, and is scarcely remembered by the writer. I must not begin a comment upon your last year's tour, when you are planning a new excursion. Yet I must say I think you are a very lively, ingenious, and intelligent traveller; and your journal was thought highly entertaining. Let me thank you, my dear L. since I can do it with the most heartfelt sincerity, for the many gratifying expressions of affection and friendship with which your letters abound: they make me alternately proud and humble; but always leave me glad and grateful. * * *

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TO THE SAME.

Colchester, November 1, 1809.

* * * LIFE appears to me now to be wearing out so rapidly, and so large a portion of mine is already spent, that I more than ever regret these long intervals in my communications with my friends. But when I consider the few days which will be all, probably, that I shall actually enjoy in the society of those from whom distance divides me, in the whole course of my life, I am obliged to take comfort in the animating hope of renewing, in a happier state, these delightful friendships, which will there flourish without interruption, and without end: and how refined and unalloyed will they then be—no selfishness or vanity, no little jealousies to imbitter their sweetness.

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I regard it as one of the greatest blessings of my life that all those whom my heart acknowledges as its owners, are travelling towards the same home, so that I can say with sincerity and peculiar emphasis, "These are the choicest friends I know." Our *earlier* friendships, though they must ever be remembered with interest and fond affection, were little adapted to promote our truest welfare. To them indeed we are indebted for many benefits of a less valuable nature; but I look to my present circle of friends with gratitude that has a nobler subject. If ever I reach that happy land where *their* possessions lie, I shall have cause for endless thanksgivings to Him who gave me such companions in my way. * * *

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TO THE SAME.

Colchester, August 10, 1810.

I DOUBT not, my very dear L. that you will agree with me in regarding it as one of the severest lessons we have to learn in the world's school, that our dearest friendships are liable to painful drawbacks;—that in those whom we are most disposed to love and revere there is usually something also to *forgive*. We can survey the world at large, and contemplate its faults and follies with comparative indifference; but with what painful reluctance are we too often compelled to confess, with regard to our nearest connections and our dearest friends, "I have seen an end of all perfection." You will think this, my dear L. rather a strange sort of salutation after our recent intercourse, and conclude perhaps that it is by way of

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exordium to a letter of censure, or at least of friendly reproof. But that, I confess, is not my present design:—I was going to add, if you had not interrupted me, that if such unwelcome discoveries are so distressing, it must be proportionably delightful and consolatory when, in some rare instances, increasing intimacy produces increased esteem, and gives a greater solidity to affection. And such, dear L. has been the happy result of my late visit with you: I may venture to tell you so, because I believe we understand each other, and should equally disdain to give or receive flattery. In you, dear L. and S. I have friends whom I think it an honour and a privilege to love; and their returned affection I value as one of my greatest blessings. It would indeed be childish and romantic folly to speak or think thus of new-made friendships; but I think ten years happy experience will justify it. Our friendship has indeed been of slow growth, and has been reared with some difficulty; but I think it is on that account the more vigorous and healthful. Now I hope it may defy blights and storms; and

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that it will continue to thrive till placed beyond the reach of either. I have much to thank you for, my dear L.—much for your active kindness; but still more for the silent eloquence of your example.—You have done me more good undesignedly, than you could intentionally; but as this subject would carry me pleasantly on to the end of my paper, I must check myself; and I am sure you have been inclined to check me before. However, what I have said is only honest simple truth; and I felt too much to be quite silent on the subject.

I should be rejoiced to think that the circumstances of our future lives would be more favourable than heretofore, to the cultivation of our friendship. Present prospects indeed seem to render this improbable. Yet we know not how or where our lot may be ordered; and I do hope, however remotely we may eventually be situated, we shall never cease to cherish a lively affection for each other.

I regret that I have never answered your last truly kind and excellent letter. I little thought

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then, that an interview would take place before I could reply. I wish, dear L. that it were in my power to answer it in the way that would afford you the most pleasure:—A cloud overshadows my mind: should it ever be dispelled, with what pleasure should I commune with you, and all my friends, on the subject that ought to be most interesting to us. I am ready to think that I should then be able to conquer that reluctance which too often seals the lips, even of sincere christians, and rejoice in free, unreserved communication. Yet I dread falling into the unfelt technicality of religious conversation. But do not let me discourage you, my dear friend, from making this the principal subject of your letters. If I am at all more in earnest in the pursuit of the best things than in the days of my vanity, I may chiefly attribute the change, under the Divine blessing, to the example and precepts of my pious friends. I think I may venture to say that I never receive one of their letters that does not make some desirable impression—transient indeed, yet beneficial. In this number I am sure

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I may place your last, which has frequently been reperused in my hours of retirement, with pleasure and advantage.

I am looking forward with the greatest pleasure to your promised visit. Nor will I allow, dearest L. that even if it were to happen at the time of our expected family meeting, you would be thought an intruder. Indeed I must say that, if ever we regarded any friends with that kind of confidence and affection which is current in one's own family, you and S. may claim that distinction. Perhaps you may be the last visitor we may receive at Colchester:—it does seem at last as if some important changes must take place in our family. Our dear brother's leaving us was the first signal; though we did not then perceive it: from that hour we might have bid adieu to the many uninterrupted years of quiet family happiness with which we had been indulged. Yet I am well persuaded it is all for our good

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TO THE SAME.

Colchester, March 14, 1811.

MY DEAR L.

NOT to be behind hand with you in generosity, I take this whole sheet, although I have so recently despatched one. But I will not promise to fill it; or if I do it must be with mere *chat*. Yet as I feel disposed to say a little more than a note ought to contain, I do not see why I should not follow the impulse. How melancholy would be our banishment from friends, if it were not for this delightful substitute for personal intercourse: it is indeed a privilege which, though so common, ought to be regarded with thankfulness. I often think, when enjoying it, of what I used to repeat when I was a good child—

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"Then thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,
Who taught me betimes to love *writing* and reading."

There are indeed many times when letter writing appears a very slow and insufficient means of communication: I have felt it so often since you left us, when I have longed for such a kind of *tête-à-tête*, as *tête alone*, cannot enjoy. But whether or not I shall ever be indulged with more of your much loved society than heretofore, I hope *this* channel of communication will never be cut off. * * *

* * * It is vain to wish there were no alloy in the pleasures of friendship; yet I cannot help wishing that, however the weeds of the field may carry on hostilities, the lovely flowers of the garden would never raise a hostile thorn. But, dear L. we know this world would be far too pleasant if we met rebuffs and crosses only from foreigners; we can all say with David, "If it had been mine enemy, I could have borne it." What smooth, pleasant afflictions we should have if we chose them for ourselves! and what

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temples of idolatry would our hearts then become! God knows *where* to strike, and how severe soever the chastisement may seem, we are well assured that

> "Crosses in his sovereign hand,
> Are blessings in disguise."

TO MR. J. C.

Colchester, April, 1811.

* * * In the present unsettled and uncertain state of our family affairs, you may perhaps imagine that I am able to think and write of little else; but I am indeed surprised to find so little perturbation occasioned by them. There was a time when such events would have

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excited strong emotions of interest and anxiety; and when I could not have believed that I should ever contemplate such changes with composure. But now I have lived long enough to feel assured that life is life, every where; and that no material augmentation of happiness is to be expected from any external sources. Care, I know, will both follow and meet me, wherever I may go—even should I be transplanted from this cheerless desert, into the bosom of my dearest friends. Friendship, far from its availing to shield us from the shafts of care, does but render us vulnerable in a thousand points. Yet, notwithstanding many anticipated troubles, there are times when I regard the possibility of a reunion with my dear brothers, and of joining the beloved circle from which we have hitherto been banished, with feelings of real delight. But our future destination is still so uncertain, that we have no distinct feeling, or very decided wish on the subject. When the idea of our leaving Colchester was first started, I desired nothing so much as a still more retired situation—I longed

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for the seclusion and tranquillity of an insulated village. A few months, however, has produced a great change in my views, if not in my wishes. Yet I believe it would be but too easy, even now, to persuade me to relinquish other projects, fraught as they are with anxiety and danger, to take refuge in some "holy shade," where I might welcome that "silence, peace and quiet," for which I feel my heart and soul are made.

Though the harassing circumstances of the last year have driven poetry and its smiling train far from my thoughts, yet I am not forgetful of the kindness which prompted you to speak a word of cheer to a fainting muse. I know I cannot better thank you for your excellent, but long neglected letter, than by saying it has fully answered the kind intention of the writer. What do you say then to my being quite convinced:—shall I tell you that I am thoroughly satisfied with my talents and attainments, and feel an agreeable confidence in my own powers; and that, however injured by envious contemporaries, I am convinced that posterity will do me justice?

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Do not you believe it? Well then, shall I tell a more probable story; and say that, in this respect at least, I have learned to be content with such things as I have; and that I have in some degree subdued that unworthy ambition which exposes one to mortification and discontent? Fatiguing and sickening is the struggle of competition. I desire to withdraw from the lists. But if this be all, you may still think your friendly endeavours were unavailing. You did not, I am sure, expect that your letter would make any material alteration in my opinions and feelings; yet it was cheering and encouraging. I assure you I felt it so; and therefore you will not think your pains unrewarded. As a source of harmless, perhaps even salutary pleasure to myself, I would not totally despise or check the poetical talent, such as it is; but it would be difficult to convince me that the world would have been any loser had I never written verses (such I mean as were composed solely for my own pleasure.) I do, however, set a much higher value on that poetical taste, or rather feeling, so far as I have it,

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which is quite distinct from the capability of writing verse; and also from what is generally understood when people say they are *very fond of poetry*. But while I desire ever to cherish the poetic *taste*, I own it appears to me to be as little my duty as my interest to cultivate the *talent* for poetry. With different sentiments I am compelled to regard my own share in what we have published for children;—the possibility of their fulfilling, in any degree, the end desired, gives them importance, and renders future attempts of a similar kind a matter more of duty than of choice. I dare not admit all the encouraging considerations you have suggested; nor can I fully explain what I feel on this subject. That "such reflections are not of a nature to inspire vanity," is true indeed. No; I desire to be humbled by the thought:—a consciousness of unworthiness makes it hard for me to indulge the hope of being rendered instrumental of the smallest good. * * *

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TO THE SAME.

Colchester, June 28, 1811.

* * * WHAT a pity it is that language should be so much abused, that what is really *meant* requires to be printed in italics! Of this the poet has most reason to complain. He *feels*, and perhaps his whole soul is filled with a passage which ninety nine of his hundred readers, at least, will peruse without emotion. This struck me in reading the first line of Thalaba—"How beautiful is night," which may be read without leaving the smallest impression. I read it so at first; but returning to it, and endeavouring to enter into the feeling with which it was written, I found it to be—"How *beautiful* is night!" and I discovered in these simple words all those inexpressible emotions with which I so

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often contemplate the dark blue depths, and of which, even Southey could say nothing more striking than—" How beautiful is night!" * * *

TO THE SAME.

Colchester, August 29, 1811.

HAVING a leisure evening, the last probably before our removal, I devote it to fulfilling my promise to write to you once more from Colchester. Yes, we are really going; and in a few days the place that so long has known us, shall know us no more. Before I quit this scene of the varied interests of my childhood and youth, I ought to give my mind a long leave of absence, and send it back leisurely to revisit the past—to " recal the years in exile driven, and break their

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long captivity;"—but in the hurry of the moment, the feeling of it is lost; and even if I could afford to send my thoughts on this retrograde excursion, and "up the stream of time could turn my sail, to view the fairy haunts of long lost hours," I ought not to ask you to accompany them; for they would stay to contemplate scenes and gaze on faces unknown and uninteresting to you. I can invite my friends to sympathize in my present interests, and to survey with me my future prospects; but of *that* fairy land they could only discern a line of blue distance; while to me, "Here a cot, and there a spire, still glitter in the sun." But a melancholy and sentimental retrospection is an unprofitable indulgence—a kind of luxury which perhaps I have no right to allow to myself. Let me rather, if I have time for contemplation, take a more humbling and painful survey; and, reviewing the sins and follies of childhood and youth, resolutely say "The time past of my life shall suffice to have wrought them." But I want energy to commence a new career. Whether my mind will recover vigour under new cir-

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cumstances, or will faint under the exertion I have in prospect, remains to be seen: it is a fearful experiment.

Here I sit in my little room: it looks just as it always did; but in a few days all will be changed: and this consecrated attic will be occupied (how shall I tell it you) by an *excisemen*; for his wife observed to me, when surveying the house—"Ah, this room will do nicely for my husband to keep his books in:"—well, I shall take with me all that has rendered it most interesting; and as to the moonshine and the sunbeams, that will continue to irradiate its walls, I would not withhold them from this son of traffic, although they will never kindle a spark of poetry in his eye.

* * * My good friend, be not too confident in your scholarship: you may be master of all the learned languages, and yet a very dunce when you endeavour to decipher the hieroglyphics inscribed on a female heart. If you have a taste for puzzling studies, there are the Babylonish bricks for you, which have hitherto defied

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so much erudition:—but there would be a chance of success in attempting to decipher *them*. * * * If I were qualified to offer the most judicious counsel on subjects where, in fact, I can but reason from distant analogies, I should still doubt whether, recalling the attention to a too interesting object, might not be productive of, at least, a counterbalancing evil. But indeed it is not my part to admonish you: were I to attempt it I could adopt no better plan than making large quotations from your own letters; and then exhorting you "to mind what the gentleman says." If I feel a kind of confidence that your hope will not be blasted, it is by no means founded upon any outward appearances, which indeed at present afford no clue to conjecture; but rather on that cheerful dependance on the Divine guidance, and humble submission to the Divine will, which characterize your feelings on this subject. That promise seems to justify such expectations, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass:—He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Yet it

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may be dangerous to refer too often to such a ground of hope, lest our very submission should become interested. * * *

TO MISS E. F.

Ongar, September 28, 1811.

MY DEAR E.

THIS is the first time I have dated from our new habitation; having at length restored things to something like order, I sit down in my new room to address an old friend. At present I scarcely know where I am, or who I am; but now that I find myself at the old favourite station —my writing desk, and suffering my thoughts and affections to flow in an accustomed channel,

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I begin to know myself again. And were it not for this, there are certain cares and troubles, bearing my name and arms, which will never suffer me long to question my personal identity: it is however by a pleasure that I ascertain it this evening: I ought not therefore to begin by complaining.

But, my dear friend, you are looking forward towards a change so much more important than a merely local one, that it may well appear to you comparatively trifling. That you are about to undergo is, of all changes, the greatest and the most interesting, but one; and that one, if brought into comparison, makes even this appear insignificant. A recollection of the certain and speedy termination of every earthly connection is, at such a season, likely rather to tranquillize, than to depress the spirits:—it is calculated to allay anxiety—not to damp enjoyment. When marriage is regarded as the forming a connection for *life*, it appears indeed a tremendous experiment; but in truth, it is only choosing a companion for a *short journey*; yet with this difference, that if

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the fellow travellers become greatly endeared to each other, they have the cheering hope of renewed intercourse and perpetual friendship at their journey's end. * * *

TO MISS M. H.

Onger, March 7, 1812.

* * * HAVING never yet been called to encounter trials so severe as those with which you have been exercised, I know I cannot fully enter into your feelings; and indeed in all cases it is so true that "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," that in general, perhaps, silent sympathy is the best kind of condolence. "To weep with those that weep," is, I believe, often an alleviation of grief; and the tenderest friendship can do little

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more than this. It is well that, at those times when the weakness and insufficiency of all human support are peculiarly manifest, such consolations are received from above as enable mourners to rejoice in their losses, and to say "It is well for me that I have been afflicted." If the sympathy of earthly friends is soothing and grateful to the wounded mind, how consolatory must it be to know and feel that, even in the midst of chastisement, "the Lord pitieth us as a father his children." You know Montgomery's "Joy of Grief," and have felt its touching sweetness, more perhaps than I can do. You have lost a friend—a brother; and you have, I doubt not, enjoyed that sabbath of the mind which christian resignation produces. In the common harassing trials and vexations of life, there is seldom any mixture of that joy which soothes and tranquillizes the mind under severer trials. But these painful bereavements which, when contemplated at a distance, appear perhaps too heavy to be borne, are rendered supportable by the strong consolations with which they are usually at-

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tended; and most frequently become occasions of thankfulness, on account of their salutary effects on the mind.

Prone as our earthly spirits are to cleave unto the dust, what should we be if all our worldly hopes were to be realized. Wise and kind is that system of discipline under which we are all placed; and when, at the close of life, we come to look back upon our mental history, we shall never be inclined to say of this affliction, or of that mortification—"It might have been spared." We shall then see that our prayers for spirituality of mind were answered by the removal of those worldly joys which produced a contrary disposition; and that when we desired that "our affections might be set on things above," our dearest friends were taken there; that so heaven might become dearer, and earth less attractive. Such weaning events must tend, not only to reconcile our minds to the shortness of life, but to make us rejoice in it. We feel that "they are light afflictions," because "they are but for a moment."

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TO MR. J. C.

Ongar, March 21, 1812.

* * * If you are indeed so happy as to be able to feel that "the attainment of your hope is worthy only of secondary anxiety," you need not the admonitions of friendship. This is all that is required of us with respect to our earthly attachments:—it is their supremacy in the affections that makes them become sources of sin and sorrow; and that often renders disappointment merciful. You need not fear making me melancholy by reminding me that "we must die to be happy:" it is a truth which, though at first admitted with reluctance, becomes more and more welcome as one earthly hope after another illudes us; till at length it is received as the best and the only source of consolation. We ought how-

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ever to distinguish between the language of christian hope, and that of worldly despondency; —between the cheerful desire which rises towards "the mansions that are preparing on high," and the gloomy contemplation of that solitude where "the weary are at rest." But it is not merely under the complete failure of our schemes of happiness that this truth is impressed upon us;—though the accomplishment of them may, at first sight, appear inconsistent with the grand condition of our pilgrimage—"in the world ye shall have tribulation," experience soon teaches us how easily our dearest delights become sources of trial;—"each pleasure has its poison too"—so that when the world has done its best for us, we are still mercifully compelled to acknowledge that, "we must die to be happy." May we both be supported by this hope in our conflict with the last enemy! * * *

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TO MISS S. L. C.

Ongar, March 24, 1813.

MY VERY DEAR L.

THOUGH in much uncertainty whether this letter will reach you amidst the bustle of preparation, or after the grand event has taken place, I shall venture to dispatch it, hoping that, under whatever circumstances it may arrive, you will not deem it too great a trespass on your time to receive my kindest wishes and most affectionate farewell. Though I have no apprehension of feeling any diminution of interest and regard towards my friend in a new character, yet I cannot but feel that I am taking leave of a name endeared by many a year of friendly intercourse; and while most sincerely rejoicing in a change which seems in every respect likely to promote

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your comfort and happiness, you will forgive me for mingling with my heartfelt congratulations, some tears of tender regret. There are no forms of expression—at least I cannot command any, which seem adequate to an occasion like the present. With every thing to feel, there seems little to be said:—the best wishes are so comprehensive, that they occupy but a small space; and the strongest emotions are usually the least eloquent. You have, my dear L. my most earnest wishes and prayers for every blessing to attend you in your new and important situation: may you look back upon the transactions of the approaching day with increasing satisfaction and pleasure, every future year of your life!

We can now look back upon past trials with feelings of joy and gratitude:—how different is the colouring of the clouds of care while they are spread over us in dense and unbroken masses, and when they are rolling off far in the distance, and leaving but a dark streak in the horizon! Now we rejoice with you, dear L. in the clear sunshine they have left. * * *

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TO MRS. W. (MISS S. L. C.)

Ongar, May 1, 1812.

My very dear friend: in compliance with your kind wish, as well as to gratify my own inclinations, I take up the pen to address a line to you. Circumstances which I need not explain have obliged me to defer writing till it is nearly time to despatch my letter; so that I am under the necessity of sending you an epistle very inadequate to the importance and interest of the occasion. At a future time I shall hope to converse with you at leisure; now I must offer my congratulations with nearly as much brevity as you conveyed your kind adieu; though not with less sincerity and affection.

In this sorrowful world the tones of joy and congratulation are so seldom heard, that one is

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almost startled by the sound; but they acquire additional sweetness from contrast:—it is truly refreshing to me to turn from various causes of pain and anxiety, to think of my dear L. and contemplate her fair prospects. For though I have lived too long in this changing world to imagine they will never be clouded; yet there is surely every reason to hope that, with the right views and moderated expectations with which you enter your new career, as large a portion of temporal happiness will enliven it as can be desired by those who are looking forward towards a better inheritance. May the blessing of Heaven rest upon you, my dear friend, in your new connection!—it is my sincere and earnest prayer for you.

Every day I live convinces me, more and more, of the folly and uselessness of forming any defined wishes for earthly happiness, either for myself or others that are dear to me;—nothing will do but resigning all to the disposal of Him who not only knows, but does what is best for us. To Him I know you have committed all

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the events of your future life; and in this cheerful dependance you must be safe and happy. * * *

TO MRS. G. (MISS E. F.)

Ongar, May 11, 1812.

MY DEAR E.

THERE was no part of your last kind letter more agreeable to me than that which expressed a wish for maintaining a more regular and frequent epistolary intercourse: on this the existence of our friendship must now, more than ever, depend; at least, without this kind of communication it cannot be either pleasant or profitable. You will give me credit for the sincerity of this declaration; although my apparent inattention might well awaken contrary suspicions; at least

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in a more recent friendship. But you and I, dear E. are too old and sober minded to indulge dreams of cruel neglects and faithless friendships: having, as I believe, entertained a sincere regard for each other for many years—a regard which though formed in the doubtful ardour of youthful enthusiasm, has healthfully survived those short lived transports—it is no longer romantic to indulge the hope that the mutual affection will be as permanent as it is sincere. I am not indeed insensible to the disadvantageous consequences of an almost total suspension of personal intercourse; and the still more unpropitious effects of an entire dissimilarity of interests and of occupations: still I am inclined to believe that there is a peculiar interest attached to the connections formed in childhood, or early youth, which is not easily lost; and that those who are inseparably united with the history of our *fairy years* may insure a place in the lively and affectionate recollections, even of declining age. I have wandered so far from my unfinished apology, that I think you will not wish me to retrace

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my steps in search of it; I will therefore only add my sincere wish and intention to atone for past remissness by future regularity.

Letter writing is much more of a task to me than it used to be: often, when I should enjoy a *tête à tête*, to converse on paper with a friend is almost burdensome. I know not whether it is that I am growing old, or stupid, or lazy; though I rather suspect, all three. Seriously however, I am certainly experiencing some of the disadvantages of increasing years. With the follies of youth, a portion of its vigour too is fled; and being deficient in constitutional or mental energy to supply its place, my mind is hanging as limp as a dead leaf. But perhaps, dear E. you will scarcely thank me for talking of the effects of *years*, in which respect I am so little beforehand with you. I do not however ascribe all to the depredations of time;—many a gay lady of five and forty retains more of youth than I do; and you, though not a gay lady, will long, I hope, appear a young and lovely wife. So I will take this opportunity to turn to a more

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pleasing subject, and tell you how much I rejoice to hear from yourself how agreeably you are realizing the fair prospects which but lately opened upon you; and from *others*, with what grace and propriety you occupy the new and important station upon which you have entered: may you long enjoy and adorn it, my dear friend! Earthly happiness (comfort I should rather say, for I believe the former exists only in the Dictionary) is indeed to be prized when it does not interfere with higher pursuits; and still more so when it tends to assist and stimulate them.

The ease and leisure afforded by such a lot as yours, is, in this view, highly desirable: it presents the most favourable opportunities of usefulness to others; and to yourself, of growing in meetness for the heavenly inheritance. Happy are you, dear E. that it is your highest ambition thus to improve them. While some are driven through life as over a stormy sea—incessantly tossed and thwarted by the restless billows, till they arrive, faint and weary, at the haven of rest; others are permitted to ramble at leisure through

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a pleasant vale, till they gradually ascend to the everlasting hills: and of how little consequence is it by which course we are led, so our wanderings do but terminate in the same blissful country. We all receive that kind of discipline which our peculiar dispositions require; and if it is severe, we may be sure it is necessary too. * * *

TO MR. J. C.

Tiverton, November 14, 1812.

* * * THOUGH you may consider this as a tardy performance of my promise, it is, I assure you, but the second letter I have dated from hence. I perceive that it is all in vain to run to the remotest corner of the earth for retirement

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and leisure; at least it is in vain to seek for them amid the rocks of Ilfracombe. * * *

I wish I could introduce you for a moment (or as much longer as you could stay) to our comfortable fire side, around which we often talk of those we have left, till we forget the distance which separates us. * * * I promise not to detain you long with descriptions of the scenery around us, to which it would probably be more toil than pleasure to listen. For in such cases, where the imagination of the writer can fly, that of the reader must climb; and perhaps she is wholly indisposed to the exertion. Besides that it is not the most agreeable thing to be told that "you can form no idea—you can't imagine —you never saw any thing like it," &c. So then, to do the thing more politely, I must tell you that *I* had formed no idea of the kind of scenery with which we are surrounded; and that I had never before seen any thing like it was evident, from the effect it at first produced upon me.

Ilfracombe is situated in a deep valley, surrounded on one side by barren hills, and on the

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other by stupendous rocks, which skirt the sea. Our lodgings very pleasantly overlook the harbour, which affords us constant entertainment. The sea is close behind the house; and is so near a neighbour that, during the last high tides, the waves rose in immense sheets of foam, and fell over a high wall opposite our chamber windows: it also flowed into the house in front, and kept us close prisoners. Our walks in every direction are so interesting that, while the weather permitted, we spent a great part of the day abroad. Our rambles among the rocks I enjoy most; though at first they excited sensations of awe and terror, rather than of pleasure. But now we climb without fear amid a wilderness of rocks, where nothing else can be seen, and nothing heard but the roar of the distant sea: here the only path is over the huge fragments which lie scattered in all directions, and which it requires some courage as well as dexterity to scale. Besides these, we have several cheerful walks, commanding the sea, bounded to the north by a beautiful line of the Welsh mountains. Their aspects are very

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various; at times appearing only like faint clouds in the horizon; but when the weather is clear, and the sun shines upon them, they exhibit an exquisite variety of light and shade, and delicate colouring, finished, by distance, like the finest miniature. From some of the highest hills we have distinctly perceived the buildings on the nearer part of the coast;—to the west the wide ocean opens before us;

> "Now sparkling with sunbeams, now dimpled with oars,
> Now dark with the fresh blowing gale."

The rocky cliffs of Lundy island add beauty and interest to the scene. * * *

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TO THE SAME.

Ilfracombe, February 17, 1814.

ALTHOUGH many months have now elapsed since we parted in the Barnstaple coach, and in all that time you have received nothing from me but a postscript, I cannot plead in excuse any of the engagements with which you accuse me:—of the whole list, there is not more than one that I can plead guilty even of thinking about. Yet your conjecture that I have been "wondrous busy," is perfectly correct. You well know how one week after another slides away, in every day of which we intend to write to our friend "to-morrow;" and when to-morrow comes, even if some pressing occupation does not fill it, it finds us so dull and flat, that we resolve to devote the evening to some "outer court," correspondent,

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for whom the only requisite materials are pen, ink, and paper. Thus it was with me during the months of November and December: of January I can give a better account; for one fatal morning, early in that month, Miss M. and I set off for Barnstaple. I said "Good bye; I shall return on Saturday;" but it was exactly a month before I saw Ilfracombe again; being imprisoned by the snow all that time. I wished to have written to you from thence, but even friendship is not warm enough to keep ink and fingers from freezing during a sharp frost; except by the fire side; and that agreeable trio—fire, friendship, and solitude, did not meet me there. I have been returned but a fortnight, the last week of which has been occupied in entertaining Mr. G. who has been our guest. He left us this afternoon; and this evening I am at your service; having clearly proved it to be the first in the last five months in which I could write to you.

Much has occurred in our little circle since we last met;—so much that if you were to ask me now, I could scarcely get through the whole.

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The recollection of all that has taken place sometimes makes me melancholy; and sometimes it makes me glad: but oftener, it makes me neither the one nor the other: but this indifference, or rather sameness of feeling under the important changes of life, always makes me melancholy when I think about it.

After walking so far through the vale of tears, inseparable companions, Ann and Jane are at last divided:—a few short interviews is all, perhaps, we shall ever more see of each other, on this side the grave. We are both still in the vale of tears, and shall continue to weep and to smile as heretofore; but not together: our way will still be chequered by cloud and sunshine; but it may often be stormy weather with one, while the other is enjoying a clear sky. But tears will not always flow;—the heart-rending feelings once over, and the common temperature of happiness returns. It is but occasionally that I have leisure to ruminate upon our separation; and then it is difficult fully to realize it. It is very true that we cannot always be as miserable

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as we wish—cheerfulness steals upon us insensibly, and we are surprised to find ourselves tolerably happy again, in spite of our heroic resolutions to the contrary. You will think these reflections unsuitable to the occasion, and perhaps say that I am too inexperienced in suffering to offer remarks upon the subject: of this however I must be allowed to be the best judge: though I have hitherto been mercifully preserved from the severer and more sudden strokes of the rod, I am not unacquainted with sorrow; and it is in consequence of what has passed in my own mind that I am sceptical as to the existence of such a thing as incurable grief, though it is often talked of. * * *

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TO MRS. G.

Ilfracombe, April 23, 1814.

* * * I DOUBT not but your natural vivacity and vigour of mind will enable you to retain, much longer than I shall, some of the sweetest feelings of youth. Those which are connected with its follies we wish not to retain; but there is a delicious glow of feeling which already I am conscious has lost much of its warmth. At this beautiful reviving season, I am reminded of *that spring* which is for ever passed away. But I would not have this letter tinged with the melancholy such reflections are apt to bring with them; especially as it is very far from my usual state of feeling. I am as happy now as I can expect ever to be in this troublous world; and could I feel a little more security of the continuance of my pre-

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sent circumstances, I should not have a wish with respect to external things. But this would be too much like a rest to be good for me. Even the recollection of the spring of life being gone by, occasions melancholy only because our views are so much confined to this infancy of our existence:—to cultivate an intimacy with the circumstances relating to its future stages is truly the only wisdom: for this alone can reconcile us to the decaying conditions of mortality. I can easily believe that those who have but lately entered into the important relations of life, feel rather as if it were but just begun, than approaching its termination. But I, who am sailing down the stream of time without any such interruption, am more conscious of progression; and have more leisure to look back upon the past, and to expect the future. But I had intended quite another strain; perhaps the scene before me has made me thus sentimental. The tide is just filling the pretty harbour, and the evening sun shines mellowly on the rich rocky banks opposite, and on the venerable hill which fronts

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the port. I enjoy, though not as I once should have enjoyed, this fine spring, in this charming place. * * *

TO MRS. W.

Marazion, June 20, 1814.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As this is one of our *Saint's days*, I cannot do better than devote it to my friends: one letter I have already despatched to Ongar; and I am sure it is quite time to address you, as I believe my last letter was written to inform you of our arrival at Ilfracombe, though I think the fault has not been all on my side. The interval has been pretty well filled with incidents:—S. and A. have not been idle:—you and the Prince Regent

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have been receiving company:—father and mother have left the Castle House:—we have removed to Marazion; and Bonaparte to Elba:—so that the world does not pay us the compliment of standing still till we have time to animadvert on its revolutions.

I would have waited a week or two longer, when I should have been better able to say how well we like our new situation, but that I hope this will now reach you before your friends leave you, as S. mentioned the last week in June for returning. To what is she returning?—I hope to a life of usefulness and happiness: I have never known one better fitted to enjoy and to adorn the peaceful scenes of domestic life, than our dear S. Happy is he who is destined to be the companion of them!

I suppose by this time Mr. C. has been introduced to his little grandson, with whom I may safely venture to guess he is pleased. I enjoy for you, my dear friend, the pure and real pleasures of the nursery. I am thinking too anxiously of dear Ann. The wide distance that separates us

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increases this anxiety:—if I could be near her, I should feel comparatively little; but to wait a five or six days' post for such intelligence is what I dread. Yet He to whom we should cheerfully commit her, is "nigh at hand, and not afar off."

* * *

* * * I told S. that we did not think of leaving Ilfracombe till August; but find that, during the summer, it does not often happen that vessels from Cornwall put into Ilfracombe, we determined to avail ourselves of the first good opportunity:—we regretted that one offered so soon:—we had scarcely twenty-four hours notice. But our little affairs were soon arranged, and at nine o'clock on the evening of the 9th, we set sail, and a mild breeze wafted us from our dear Ilfracombe. We were tolerably well till about the middle of the night, when a fresh gale sprang up, and from that time to the moment of our landing, at nine o'clock the following evening, we suffered continued sickness. We landed at St. Ives, and took lodgings there for a week: on Friday evening we reached this

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place, where we had before engaged lodgings: they are not so pleasantly situated as those we occupied at Ilfracombe; but they are comfortable; and our hostess is a good woman, who takes pains to please us.

Marazion is pleasantly situated on the margin of Mount's Bay, which forms a fine sweep: on the western side lies Penzance, nearly opposite to us, at the distance of three miles:—it is a fine ride by the sea side. This morning we have been there: it is a large and very pleasant town; and being so near, we can have many of the conveniences it affords. The views here are open and agreeable: St. Michael's Mount is a fine object, distant about half a mile, and Penzance and the adjacent villages very prettily skirt the Bay. We were recommended here in preference to Penzance, as being milder, and it suits us better on account of its being more retired. In spite of our nonconformity we shall probably attend at the chapel of ease, at which Mr. ——— now officiates, whose name I dare say you have heard. * * *

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TO MISS E. M.

Marazion, Cornwall, July 2, 1814.

* * * THE expectation of shortly leaving Ilfracombe, almost ever since I received yours, dated in April, made me defer writing from day to day, thinking I should soon be able to tell you where we were destined; but at last we went off so suddenly that we had scarcely time to arrange our own little affairs; and although I have felt impatient to do so, I would not write immediately after our arrival here, that I might be better able to tell you how we like Cornwall. I have been sorry to hear that you are unwell, and I know that you do not complain of trifles. It is not surprising that, exchanging the pure air of Devon for such as you are now inhaling, your

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health should suffer. Although there is so little temptation to go abroad, you must not neglect daily exercise. It is not complimenting London air too much, to allow that it is better out of doors than in. I am not surprised that London makes you love Devonshire more than ever. The sight of it, especially after a considerable absence, never fails to make me low-spirited; and I scarcely know whether this is occasioned most by its *wretchedness*, or its *magnificence*. I entirely understand your affection for the old mulberry tree: there is a laburnum at Colchester which is quite as good a friend of mine. I saw it blossom sixteen springs; and plucked a spray when I took leave of it, thinking it would be a great pleasure to ruminate over it now and then, but I believe I have never found time to look at it yet: it has lain ever since undisturbed, amidst a variety of similar relics, which have been abandoned to the same neglect.

In consequence of strongly urged advice, we determined, early in the year, to remove to Cornwall during the summer months; for I could not

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summon courage to undertake the voyage on the approach of the autumnal gales. We had not intended to leave Ilfracombe quite so soon; but a good opportunity offering, we availed ourselves of it, and after a passage more safe than agreeable, landed at St. Ives, from whence we crossed to this place; which has been recommended to us in preference to Penzance; and where we had already engaged lodgings.

I think you have not been so far in Cornwall; so I may tell you that we are very pleasantly situated on the margin of Mount's Bay, which forms a fine regular sweep, surrounded by sheltering hills. Penzance, a very handsome town, at the distance of three miles, is in full view; and with its adjacent villages, prettily skirts the bay. The surrounding country is open and cheerful; near Penzance, pleasantly wooded; and here and there are some shaded and rural spots. St. Michael's Mount, directly opposite to us, and accessible at low water, is the most striking object in the scene. We have not yet thoroughly explored it; but it is much finer and

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more picturesque than we had expected, from such views as we had seen of it. Altogether we are pleased with our situation; it is a complete contrast to the wild and solitary scenery of Ilfracombe. Being prone to form local attachments, I cannot at present decide impartially to which I should give the preference.

How long we shall sojourn in this land of strangers is quite uncertain. I feel with you, that I dare not look forward to distances I may never reach: and I too could think of next summer with the delightful hope of again seeing many that are dear to me; but I am afraid of expecting it, or of forming any plan beyond to day: by painful lessons I have learned that it is vain and dangerous to do so. Seldom perhaps, till we have lived long enough to observe that the wishes we form for ourselves are either directly thwarted, or if indulged, that they wholly disappoint our expectation, are we sincerely disposed to say "Choose thou mine inheritance for me." When such wishes appear very moderate and limited—falling far short even of the common

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objects of worldly pursuit—when we ask neither for length of days, riches, nor honours; but only for some one favourite comfort, we are almost ready to expect that such a reasonable request will be granted; and it is well if we are taught, either by being disappointed *of* it, or *with* it, that eager desires for any thing short of the favour of God, are displeasing to Him, and injurious to ourselves: there is a sweet feeling of security in committing our future way to Him, with an entire dependance on his wisdom and goodness, and a cordial acquiescence in his appointments. * *

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TO MR. J. C.

Moravian, September 22, 1814.

* * * Now that you are so much a man of business I should really scruple to intrude upon you with four pages of *thoughts* and *reflections*, if I were not persuaded that there are frequent moments when, in all respects essential to true friendship and friendly intercourse, you are what you were in times that are past. And as I feel it to be pleasant and refreshing to sit down and converse with you as we were wont, so I have no doubt you will still peruse the somethings or nothings that may escape from my pen with a kindred feeling. Months have passed since I wrote to you; and in the interval I have travelled a hundred miles further west, and seen many new places and faces: but this I can say

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(and I hope you will think it worth sending three hundred miles to tell you) that associating with strangers, so far from alienating my thoughts and affections from those I have long known and valued, attaches me still more to them. I am surrounded with those who know that I am—Miss Taylor; but know not that I am—"Jane;" and it sometimes makes me sigh for a renewal of intercourse with those who, for that simple reason, have yielded me an unmerited share of their regard. The many follies, infirmities, and deficiencies which are intimately known to them, may, it is true, be partially and for a time concealed from strangers; but yet, I would rather be with those who, "with all my faults, have loved me still." * * * * * * Nothing can be more tranquil and agreeable than the manner in which our time passes here: we are both sufficiently occupied to preserve us from dulness; nor do we need other relaxation than the pleasure of conversing with each other in those hours of the day which we spend together. We have, however,

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some society here—more indeed than at Ilfracombe. I would gladly avoid the trouble of it; but I know it is good for me to be obliged to exert myself in conversation sometimes. * * * * * * I do not think my attachment to nonconformity is likely to be at all shaken by my present circumstances; on the contrary, I long to attend "among my own people," and to worship in the simplicity of the gospel. Yet it is both pleasant and useful to associate with good people who differ from ourselves.

It is not from intention, but accident, that I am writing to you on this day of the month. You remember, I dare say, the advanced stage at which I am arrived:—at five and twenty I regretted the departure of youth; but now I am quite reconciled to being as old as I am. In looking back upon the past, nothing strikes me so forcibly, for future benefit, as the different sensations occasioned by a review of its *misfortunes*, and its *faults*. Upon seasons of care, anxiety, and distress, of which (though they have been comparatively few and light) I can remem-

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ber some, I can reflect without a feeling of regret or uneasiness; indeed there is a kind of satisfaction and complacency in looking back upon scenes of suffering; while the mistakes, follies, and sins, that have marked my life, are sources of present and perpetual uneasiness. Of this, past experience and present feeling tend increasingly to convince me, that, whatever afflictions may be appointed for me in future, if, in the course of the next ten or twenty years (should I see so many) I shall attain more holiness, I shall also enjoy more happiness, than in the years that are past. To do quietly the duties of *to-day*, without ambition, and without anxiety, is to ensure comfort;—and comfort is a word that suits better the present state than happiness; and, in truth, it is all that would be desired by us if our thoughts were familiar with death and eternity;—if we habitually remembered that the time is short—that all we are most interested about is passing away, and that the flower we best love fadeth.

* * *

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TO MISS E. M.

Marazion, May 31, 1815.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ALTHOUGH I quite forget the date of my last, I know that I have many times since felt much inclined to converse with you; and that I have not written before is only owing to the constant recurrence of some employment that is more immediately pressing, and whose plea is more readily admitted, because it is usually something that requires less exertion than writing, even to so kind and candid a friend as you; to whom I know the most simple expressions of regard are more agreeable than a studied epistle. Some people think it a great recommendation to be able to write a "clever letter;" but if there is

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any thing I dislike to receive, or that I am unambitious of writing, it is a *clever* letter; by which I mean a letter that exhibits obviously an endeavour to be smart and pointed; or worse still —fine and sentimental. In this I am sure you will think with me. But to my languid mind, it is generally an effort to say any thing beyond how d'ye do; and therefore I often delay the task in hope of an hour of vigour, till those who are oftenest remembered might fairly imagine themselves forgotten. But now, though I am flat and chilly, and have more than half a head ache, I am determined to spend the morning with you.

What you told me in your last letter, made me almost envy the situation of those to whom religion appears as a glorious *novelty*, and who embrace it with all the ardour, and gratitude, and joy, of a newly received message from heaven. They who, "from their childhood, have been taught the Holy Scriptures" have, no doubt, their advantages; but how liable are these advantages to be abused! It often happens, I believe, that persons who have been long familiar with the

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name of Jesus, as the sinner's friend, are shamed out of their coldness and negligence by the warmth and energy of those whose eyes are newly opened to behold Him.

To inquiries, such as those which you make relative to your not having felt the strong convictions and the overwhelming fears that many experience in the commencement of their religious course, I have heard the most judicious christians reply, that a holy walk with God, a humble consciousness of preferring Him, and his service, to any other thing, is a better and safer evidence of a real change of heart, than a reference to the most remarkable emotions of mind, at any particular time. The Bible does not specify any certain measure of terror, or any violent apprehensions of the Divine anger, as essential to true conversion. —"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," is its simple declaration; and as the evidence that we do believe, and that our repentance is genuine, we must "bring forth the fruits of righteousness." True sorrow for sin, flowing from a contemplation of Divine mercy,

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which is called in the Scriptures "a broken heart," is surely a more acceptable sacrifice than the most fearful apprehensions of Divine wrath.

I cannot pass over in silence your hint on the subject of church communion. Although it is no where mentioned as essential to salvation, yet the tender injunction of our Lord—"Do this in remembrance of me," is so forcible an appeal to our gratitude, that the neglect of it cannot be considered an immaterial circumstance. If the rules of a society, calling itself a church of Christ, are so strict as to present any real obstacle to a humble candidate, they must be unscriptural. And in some places, where a full written account of the candidate's religious history and feelings is made an *indispensable* condition of admission, *such rules are unscriptural:* though, even then, whether the exaction should be considered as a real obstacle, is a serious question. In most cases, I believe, a private conversation with the minister, or a christian friend, is deemed sufficient; and whether so, or in writing, a simple and general profession of trust in the Lord Jesus,

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and of willingness to surrender heart and life to his service, is all that would be required. Many, no doubt, would be better pleased with a circumstantial experience; but I believe it is very rarely *demanded;* and I am sure it would not be by your present pastor. You know too, that what is communicated on such occasions is not heard or read by a whole congregation; but only by the members of the church; and that, in the absence of the candidate. The admission of a member is always considered as a pleasing and profitable, not an awkward or formidable service, by those who witness or are engaged in it. * * *

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TO MRS. W.

Marazion, September 19, 1815.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is quite time to ask you how you do once again upon paper, though if you did but know it, I am very often making the inquiry in my thoughts. I have so many far distant and dear friends to think of now, that my thoughts are become quite expert at the business, and fly from Ongar to Rotherham, and from thence to Axminster, Bridport, or London, with wonderful ease and expedition. There was a passage in your last letter which brought old days so forcibly and suddenly to my recollection, that it made my tears overflow before I was aware:—There is a long train of recollections, you know, connected with those days;—but they are over and gone;—all is

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settled, and well settled. For myself, as to external things, I was never so happy—I should rather say so comfortable, for that word best suits this world, as I am now. The last two years of my life have been so tranquil, so free from irritation, passed in a manner so suited to my taste and temper; with such a beloved and congenial companion;—they have been so occupied with agreeable employments, and so enlivened at times by pleasant society, that I have often thought, should any thing occur to alter my present lot, I should look back upon it as the brightest spot in my life: —Ah well. I hope I am in some degree willing to commit the future to one who knows how to control it, and who will certainly prolong my present comfort if it is for my good.

I heard from ——— a little news which did but serve to set off our perfect tranquillity to more advantage. * * *

* * * Oh what a world it is! Well indeed if we learn from such things to despise it in the right way, and to be looking towards a better country. * * *

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TO MISS M. H—E.

Meraxion, October 16, 1815.

YOUR ceremonious commencement of our correspondence, my dear M. was so discordant with my feelings, at the moment of receiving your affectionate letter, that I determined to break through all restraint at once. But if you do not follow my example, I shall consider it as a signal for returning to the usual formality in the next.

Your kind letter was gratifying to me as a better evidence of real regard than the most elaborate epistle. I thank you for your many expressions of friendship. If I were conscious of having been a friend to you in every and the best sense, I should receive them with unmixed pleasure. I am however the more obliged for affection which must overlook so many deficiencies,

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imperfections, and infirmities, as a twelvemonth's intercourse has exhibited to your view. I say this, not as a flourish, but from the bottom of my heart. It was some time after your departure before I quite ceased to listen for the well-known step upon the stairs: for a few days I was miserably flat, and unable to take any interest in my employments. But I have by this time began to be again sensible of the pleasures of regularity, and of the satisfaction of resting in some degree upon myself. This revival however is not accompanied by any diminution of regard towards those who are gone. The substantial pleasure of having *gained a friend*—of having one more heart in this cold world with which I can feel sympathy, and from which I may expect it, remains. And as for the rest, the relief and recreation of frequent intercourse—it is a pleasure which, however desirable, may be cheerfully resigned, without at all impairing friendship; and which, indeed, might have been enjoyed independently of any feeling that deserves the name. * * *

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TO MISS E. M.

Mevagissey, January 16, 1816.

* * * HERE we are surrounded by Methodists; and have the opportunity of knowing what Methodism really is. We usually attend at their chapel: their preachers generally appear to be zealous and devoted men; and their preaching well adapted to be useful to the class of persons who are their hearers. I have never any where before seen so general a profession of religion; and there is every reason to believe it is more than a profession with many. A little romantic fishing town, just opposite to us across the bay, contains, we are told, a large society of experienced and fervent christians; and it is the case with many of the forlorn, desolate looking villages in the neighbourhood, that seem in all things

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else a century or two behind the rest of the world. * * *

* * * When one has been screwed up for some time with narrow-minded people, it is no small relief to meet with those of enlarged and liberal views; especially if their piety does not suffer by their intelligence. But I am indeed much inclined to believe that the *poor* in every sense, the mentally poor, are generally the richest in faith—that they receive the gospel more simply *as it is*, without reasonings and disputings, and live upon it more entirely, and more happily. * *

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TO THE SAME.

Marazion, April 24, 1816.

* * * I AM glad you have heard and were pleased with Mr. ——— and wish you knew him as a parlour companion :—one does not often meet with a person so completely intellectual.

Of Methodism and Arminianism, I knew scarcely more than the names before I came here, and am very glad of having seen them for myself. Cornwall certainly offers a favourable specimen of the Methodists: the good they have done is unquestionable, even by the most prejudiced witnesses. But what they have effected is fairly attributable to their zeal and laboriousness, rather than to their peculiar opinions. The ignorant poor, when they become pious, are so almost exclusively "taught of God"—they are so little en-

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cumbered with human knowledge, that I believe it makes very little practical difference indeed whether they are called Arminians or Calvinists. The same unerring Spirit guides the minds of both to all essential truth. But does it not seem that opinions are of more importance, and produce more decided effects in the more cultivated? I think I have lately witnessed some such effects. An Arminian who is much interested in his peculiar views, unconsciously perhaps to himself, very sparingly and partially exhibits in his preaching the *good news* of the christian system:—he seems fearful of preaching a too free salvation for sinners. I am far from saying that this is the case generally with the Methodist preachers; but I am sure it was the case with the most zealous Arminian I ever heard or knew. But if peculiar opinions give a bias to the strain of preaching on one side, there can be no doubt that it does so in a much more baleful degree on the other. I would much rather, as I value my soul's safety, attend the preaching of an Arminian, than of a *high* Calvinist. I have heard a

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few of these preachers, and have seen and heard much of the effects of such doctrine among the common people. It is said to be just now a fast spreading evil among the evangelical clergy of the establishment; and it is spreading like a leprosy among the ignorant in all denominations. I believe there is scarcely any tendency towards it among the regular dissenting *ministers*; but some of their flocks are infected. There is something so flattering, and imposing, and *comfortable*, in the statements of preachers of this class, and the evil (except in avowed Antinomianism) is so much concealed, that it is no wonder the doctrine is eagerly embraced by those who wish for a cheap and indulgent way of getting to heaven; nor even that many of the sincere and humble are led into the snare. If the accounts we hear are correct, it is not Towgood, but high Calvinism that has induced Mr. —— to leave the establishment:—it is said he objects especially to reading the Ten Commandments!

Having heard and seen so much of the evil tendency of these sentiments, I was very sorry to hear

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lately that they had found their way to ——: at least what I heard led me to suppose that it was so:—it was said that Mr. —— had lately professed that a great change had taken place in his views; —that he now perceived he had never before known or preached *the gospel;* and that the minds of many of his most pious hearers had, in consequence of this change, been very much unsettled; but that they were now falling into his views. Now though it would be wrong to judge upon this evidence alone, yet this is so precisely the language of the party, that one cannot but fear that the fact is as I have supposed. * * * * * Many of the people, I have no doubt, are so truly christians that their own minds may sustain but little injury, and their lives continue as ornamental to their profession as before; but it is not probable that this will be the case with the majority. It is certainly a temptation to a young man to preach in that strain, for nothing will so certainly ensure popularity.

I am glad that so favourable a change has

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taken place at ——, and hope Mr. —— may find some judicious guide to direct his inquiries; though if he is indeed inquiring, he will doubtless be directed well at last. I have lately read an excellent paper on Hyper-calvinism, explaining some causes of its growth, and especially tracing it to a backwardness on the part of many professedly evangelical ministers in introducing the grand truths of the gospel; so that their hearers, having real cause of complaint, readily run to the opposite extreme.

You have indeed been led to the true, the only way of solving your difficulties on some of the deeper doctrines of religion. Every attempt to explain them has, to me, always rather increased than removed the difficulty, and my own discouragement. But certainly, I should not fly to *Arminianism* in order to escape from it. This system may indeed seem to remove the difficulty a step further off; but there it meets us again, just the same as before, unless the omnipotence and omniscience of God be disputed. But let us wait:—it is but a little while and we shall

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comprehend something of the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God; though now "unsearchable and past finding out." How chilling are the very terms of controversy, and how unlike the language of the Bible! To live near to God, to walk humbly with Him, is the surest way of having our minds satisfied on these points. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him: He will shew them His covenant." * * * *

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TO MISS A. M.

Ongar, August 28, 1816.

* * * YOUR welcome letter found me at Sheffield, and arrived when I was in a party of agreeable friends; but I gladly stole away for a short time to give it a hasty perusal; reserving for the first leisure hour a more careful one. It was indeed welcome, and truly gratifying to me, my dear friend; and for all the kindness it breathes, I thank you sincerely. But why have you neglected to fulfil your promise of telling me something of yourself—body and mind? I can only gather from one expression that you have been unwell; but to what extent, I am left to conjecture. Do not fail in this respect again; but remember what I have often told you, that

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the surest way of making your letters interesting is to let them contain particulars respecting yourself. I shall be severely punished indeed for having made "Egotism" the subject of one of my "Rhymes," if it should influence any of my friends to refrain from those communications, on which the interest of a friendly correspondence entirely depends. In truth, I have found it one of the inconveniences attendant upon making one's opinions public (and I assure you these inconveniences are not few) that others are apt to suppose one is always on the watch for those failings that have been censured; or that the censure or raillery was directed against some individual. I assure you it is much more from a knowledge of my own heart, than from observation on the failings of others, that I have been impelled to write on the subjects I have chosen.

I wish this fine morning I could take a turn with you in your pleasant garden, and talk instead of write; or rather, if wishing were of any avail, I would wish that you could take a turn

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with me in mine, which I think you would enjoy. I must however tell you something of our movements. We staid a fortnight longer with Ann than we proposed;—the time passed pleasantly, and we were unwilling to part. I think, however, you, who know my taste for retirement, and my dislike of general company, would have pitied me if you had seen the continued bustle of visiting with which my time was occupied. The contrast with our mode of life at Marazion was as great as it could be: perhaps the total change of scene was what I needed.

On the 13th of August we left Rotherham, and in a few days reached our dear paternal home, after an absence of three years. It was indeed a joyful meeting; and when, that evening, we once more knelt around the family altar, I believe our hearts glowed with gratitude to Him who had permitted us thus to assemble in peace and comfort, and had disappointed all our fears. Here we are again in complete retirement; and a sweeter retreat I do not wish for.

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We are nearly a mile from the town, and surrounded with the green fields. The house is an old fashioned place, with a pretty garden, which it is the delight of my father and mother to cultivate: at the door is a rural porch, covered with a vine. Here we are rarely interrupted by any one; and although only twenty miles from the great world, we enjoy the most delightful seclusion. The rooms are large and pleasant, and the whole has exactly that rural air which we all so much admire. * * *

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TO MISS M. H——E.

Hastings, December 10, 1816.

If you knew the glow of pleasure and affection with which I take up my long-neglected pen, every suspicion of neglect which my silence may have occasioned would be dispelled. I know of few things that would give me greater pleasure than your taking a place at our new fireside; and as the best substitute for that unattainable pleasure, I do hope you will, as soon as compatible with your engagements, let me receive another of your interesting, and ever-welcome epistles. * * *

* * * Here we are enjoying as much comfort as I expect in this world. Our lodgings are pleasanter than those we occupied

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at Marazion. We are close to the sea; and all the rooms command a full view of it. Hastings, however, affords by no means the quiet seclusion which we there enjoyed. In summer, of course, it is crammed with Londoners; and even through the winter many families remain; so that the walks, though very picturesque, are continually invaded. * * *

I think my last was written from Sheffield. We soon after took a painful leave of our dear sister; and returned, after three years absence, to Ongar. Oh what a pleasure it was to be welcomed by kind parents to a *home!* Nothing could exceed their kindness and indulgence all the time we were there; and after so long an interval, we knew how to value this affection. They thought me not looking well; and it has been my dear mother's constant business to nurse me up again during my stay. Our house stands alone in a pretty country: it is an old farm house —more picturesque than splendid, and therefore it suits both our tastes and our fortunes. I enjoyed exceedingly the three quiet months we

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spent there: all my love of nature returned in a scene so well adapted to excite it; and it was delightful to see our dear father and mother enjoying, in their declining years, so peaceful a retreat, and wishing for no other pleasures than their house and garden, and their mutual affection afford.

Although I have dwelt so long upon our affairs and adventures, I must a little longer continue the same strain, to thank you for the generous and candid praise you have bestowed upon my last volume. I do assure you that the sensible and sincerely expressed approbation of the friends I love is far more gratifying to me than that of a world of strangers: and from *you* I feel especially pleased to receive this approbation; because the book contains some lines with which you must be so far from pleased, that nothing but genuine liberality could enable you to judge favourably of the remainder. I would that my spirit were as catholic as yours! * * *

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TO MISS E. M.

Hastings, March 7, 1817.

* * * As I feel obliged to my friends for remembering me ever, I do not complain, though I may regret a long silence. Of all things I dread having to do with *affrontable* people; and therefore have always endeavoured to avoid this disposition myself. Besides, as in the present instance, I am chargeable with a long silence, I have no right to find fault with you. That feeling of self-importance which leads one to make a large demand upon the recollections and attentions of friends is gradually cured by time and experience, if not by good sense and reflection; and altogether it is, I hope, pretty well damped in me. For a few weeks during the last summer, I felt much pleasure in the thought

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of being once more within reach of you; but that plan was abandoned, and I have now little expectation of seeing North Devon again. It is a country I shall always remember with interest, both on account of the friends I found there, and because it was the first romantic country I had ever seen; and that first vivid impression is such as will never be effaced. I am glad however that my North Devon friends are not *fixtures*, like its hills. * * *

I am sorry to hear of the unpleasant circumstances at ———. People will never understand that it is not religion, but *irreligion* that causes these mischiefs. If "the children of God are peace-makers," surely the breakers of peace cannot claim Him for their Father. I remember Miss ———, and that she was what you describe. I knew one in still humbler life at ——— of the same sort. She was a servant in the house we occupied there for a few months;—a methodist, and of such slender abilities that she could rarely understand a common order, till it had been repeated once or twice. Yet she was

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indeed "wise unto salvation." Her conversation (perfectly unaffected and unassuming) was, on religious subjects, enlightened and edifying. Her plain face beamed till it was beautiful with christian love and peace. I remember her with affection and respect. How strange it seems that in christian societies so few should be found who thus "*adorn* the doctrine they profess in all things." Nothing is more discouraging than such a state of things. But, in one sense, we have nothing to do except with ourselves. If our own lamps be not burning, we might find better employment than to lament the lukewarmness of others.

How strange that those who know they must die, should ever feel indifferent about the future world! It is one of the strongest marks of a depraved nature—one of the greatest wonders of the present state. I have sometimes thought that more might be done than is commonly attempted in education, to familiarize the idea of death to the minds of children, by representing it as the grand event for which they are born; and

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thus making a future state the object of their chief interest and ambition: perhaps something more might be done;—but after all, we know and feel that nothing but the mighty power of God can overcome the earthliness of the mind, and give it the discernment of things spiritual. * * *

TO MISS A. M.

Hastings, March 18, 1817.

* * * This fine weather reminds me strongly of Marazion. I look at the sea, and sometimes fancy I am on the shores of Mount's Bay; and sometimes wish myself on board one of the vessels we see passing down channel, which might in a few hours convey me

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to those from whose society I am separated. But though this may not be, the time is fast coming when there will be only a dark river to pass in order to unite us. The indistinct ideas we have of the unseen world render it difficult to derive so much pleasure from such thoughts as they are fitted to yield. Yet when we recollect how soon this fearful stream must be forded, it is surprising that we can feel deep interest in any thing beside. But alas! our eyes are beclouded, and not so much by the fears of death, as by the cares and interests of life; at least it is thus with me. The longer we live the more we see of the weakness, deceitfulness, and vanity of our hearts, and of the inefficiency of outward circumstances to rectify these inward, deep-rooted evils. I used to think, when I was more exposed to the common snares of the world than I have lately been, that if I were but completely secluded from it, I should find it comparatively easy to make progress in the divine life. But I have had the most humbling proofs that the evil lies within. * * *

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TO MISS M. H——E.

Hastings, March 18, 1817.

* * * SINCE I have been here I have looked back with more regret than ever to the short season of my intimacy with you. Until within a few days I have not conversed with a human being since I came to Hastings, except my brother and the people of the house. The dissenting minister of the chapel died very soon after we came here: since that time there has been no minister settled at the place. We have generally attended at church. Mr. —— whom I mentioned to you, has preached, during the winter, in both churches: they have been unusually crowded, and much attention has been excited, at least among the common people: the higher classes complain of his Methodism: he preaches

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with much earnestness and faithfulness; and it is to be hoped will do good. * * *

I was sure, my dear friend, before your last letter convinced me of it, that, in your present solitude and banishment from external excitements, your mind would grow, and your graces brighten. So that when you are restored to the pleasures of society, you will be prepared to meet its dangers. Ah! it is easier to "keep the heart with all diligence" amongst common, than amongst interesting people, is it not? That the seat of the evil, however, is not in the world without, but in the heart, I have the fullest conviction. It may be wise, indeed, to fly from outward temptations; but if this is all, we do much too little. The experience I have had of life, and of my own heart, renders me (at least in times of sober reflection) increasingly indifferent with respect to future events. There is certainly this great advantage in having tried several different modes of life, that one can ascertain in what degree circumstances tend to influence the character and affect the happiness. I have been

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placed in situations such as I should have imagined, some years ago, would have made me extremely happy; and now I know that nothing *external* can do this. And though there are enjoyments that I have not tried, yet I see others in the possession of them, and I observe in them the appearances of dissatisfaction. Thus I endeavour to check the inquiry which we are all so ready to make—"Who will shew me any good?" It is easier even to repress this inquiry, than to conclude the verse with sincerity—"Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and that shall put more joy in my heart."

Have you ever met with any of Madame de Staël's writings? I have just been reading *Corinne ou l'Italie*, and have been so deeply interested that it seems as though I had gained a new friend. It gives a striking description of Italy:—as a *novel*, though of deep interest, it is in some respects faulty. But the profound reflections with which it abounds—displaying the most intimate acquaintance with the human heart, and the most just and elevated taste for nature, and the

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fine arts, form its distinguishing merit. She is said to be, and I can believe it to be just, the first female writer in Europe. You may judge how much the book interested me when I tell you that, lazy as I am, I made many pages of extracts from it. I have however had forbearance enough not to read another novel of hers which is in the library here; for indeed I have felt the enervating effects upon the mind of reading in succession several works of the lighter class. I have however, with the one exception mentioned, abstained from novels: but too much poetry produces an effect of the same kind, and I have lately been taking *tonics;* that is, reading Robertson's histories of Scotland, and of Charles V. I am now reading the life of Mrs. Carter, in which, though there is much *literary trifling*, which is to me extremely disagreeable, yet I find what repays one for the perusal. I think you would be pleased with it, as her tastes and talents were so much of your order.

Do not be discouraged with regard to your qualifications for teaching, because you find the

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work laborious, and your pupils sometimes incorrigible. I believe it is your *fort*. But your being "apt to teach," cannot always make your scholars apt to *learn*.

It was mere forgetfulness at the time, that I did not give you the history of the Lascars, and of the interesting wreck which happened a few days after you left us. I fully intended to do so, but forgot it when I next wrote, and now it is too much out of date. Poor Andrew, the sick stranger, remained three months under the care of Miss M. she was entirely the means of restoring him to life; and she sent him away completely equipped by her own hand.† * * *

† See Vol. II. page 60.

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TO MISS S. G.

Ongar, August 23, 1817.

MY DEAR S.

WHEN I heard of your being suddenly summoned to attend your brother, I felt an immediate desire to write to you, not from the idle expectation that I could say any thing to lessen your uneasiness; but from a feeling of true sympathy which similarity of circumstances awakened. I asked for your address when I wrote to Ann, but was still dubious whether to trouble you with a letter, when the arrival of yours quite determined me. I thank you for it, and I thank you still more for finding any pleasure in writing to me, and for the assurances of your kind recollections. They are, I assure you, accept-

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able. I have learned to value a little *love*, more than many times the quantity of *praise;* and when I receive expressions of affection from any one who, I know, in some degree understands me, and who has had opportunity of observing many of my faults, I feel both obliged and *comforted.*

I was truly glad to hear a better account of your brother's health. I think you cannot yet have felt more desponding than I have formerly done about my brother: for a considerable time I was quite persuaded that he could not recover; and whenever I allowed myself to entertain any hope, I felt all the time a secret conviction that it was wilful flattery. Yet now—I would say it with thankfulness—he is so far recovered as to remove all immediate anxiety. I know not whether there is any thing encouraging to you in this;—but it *is* encouraging to know that the same Almighty Friend who spoke the healing word in one case, can do so in another; and assuredly *will*, if it be really desirable. He who is "the same yesterday to-day and for ever," still

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regards the prayers and tears of a sorrowing sister. I used very often to say—"Lord, if thou art here my brother shall not die;" and I used to try to add—"thy will be done;" and if ever I can say this with sincerity it is when I take pains to reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God; and think how *certainly* what He does is best. And even with respect to the spiritual interests of beloved friends, where, certainly acquiescence in disappointment is most difficult (perhaps in this world impossible) even in this case, there is great consolation in recollecting that the Judge of all the earth will do right. We are not more benevolent or more compassionate than He; and it is with this simple persuasion that I find it easiest to repel those hard and rebellious thoughts of God which certain passages to which you allude are so apt to excite. We may be sure that if we put any construction upon them that is in any way injurious to the Divine character in our minds, it is—it must be a false construction. I think there is greater encouragement to pray for the salvation of those dear to us, than for any

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thing—except our own. There are indeed many instances of the prayer of faith being answered at last in such cases;—but it should be the prayer of *faith;* not a desponding, distrustful prayer; "When ye ask, *believe* that ye shall receive, and ye shall have."

I do not know whether your removal to —— was agreeable to you or otherwise. Your attachment to —— was, I believe *local*, and one may suffer in parting from places, as well as from persons. I know you must regret the beautiful scenery you have left; especially as all you have thought and felt in that period of life when the thoughts are most lively, and the feelings most keen, is inseparably associated with it. There the illusions of youth have been cherished; and whatever scenery may surround you when they begin to fade, it will inevitably appear less enchanting.

I am so perfectly acquainted with the whole history and mystery of the feelings you describe, that you need not expatiate on that subject. Madame de Staël, who seems to have felt every

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thing that a susceptible mind can feel in this world, has some admirable passages on that very subject:—in the prospect of quitting society of a certain kind, she says,—

"Il me semblait que j'entrerais en possession de l'univers le jour où je ne sentirais plus le souffle dessechant de la mediocrité malvaillante." Again:—"On est honteux des affections fortes devant les ames legéres: un sentiment de pudeur s'attache à tout ce qui n'est pas compris—a tout ce qu'il faut expliquer—à ces secrets de l'ame enfin, dont on ne vous soulage qu'en les devinant." Again:—"C'est en vain qu'on se dit, tel homme n'est pas digne de me juger;—telle femme n'est pas capable de me comprendre:—le visage humain exerce un grand pouvoir sur le coeur humain; et quand vous lisez sur ce visage une disapprobation secrete elle vous inquiete toujours, en depit de vous même; enfin, le circle qui vous environne finit toujours par vous cacher le reste du monde."

I have not given these extracts to fill up my letter; but because I thought they would please

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you; though perhaps it is necessary to be somewhat acquainted with her style fully to enter into them.

After all, a little—or perhaps a great deal of christian humility is the best antidote to the uncomfortable feelings generated by mixing with society either above or beneath one; and the simple desire to do others good will dissipate in a moment a thousand unfavourable feelings.

Do not suppose I am in your debt in affectionate thoughts and agreeable recollections of the hours we spent together; and believe me to be very affectionately your friend.

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TO MRS. G.

Reading, January 20, 1818.

MY DEAR E.

I HAVE indeed longed to tell you how much I have felt for and with you, since I heard of your severe illness; and being myself at the time the account reached me considerably indisposed, and in low spirits about my complaint, I felt a peculiar sympathy with you, thinking it probable that, after being so many years connected in intimate friendship here, we might in a very short time recommence our intercourse in another world. However this may be, we may each of us feel persuaded that it cannot be many years before we enter that world.—That we should either of us see old age is improbable. O that

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this quickening thought might have its due influence!

I have still occasional pain, which keeps alive anxiety; but on the whole my spirits are pretty good. I endeavour to cast *this* care on God; and especially to impress my mind with the consideration that, even if my most sanguine hopes of recovery should be realized, it would make no *essential* difference in my prospects. There is no cure for *mortality*. Attention and supreme regard to my eternal interests is absolutely necessary, independent of all immediate considerations. Yet I feel the use—the benefit of this perpetual monitor, and pray that its voice may not be heard in vain; for after all, the most threatening afflictions are vain, unless the Spirit of God makes them the means of good to us. This too I have strikingly experienced. But how encouraging under all discouragements is that simple promise —"Ask and ye shall receive;" especially when we reflect that God, "who cannot lie," *has given it to each of us*. This may encourage us to ask, not only for salvation from the wrath to come, or

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for just grace enough to save us at last, with which it would be easy to be contented; but for great spiritual blessings—eminent spirituality of mind—"a life hid with Christ in God," so as to have at last "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God." * * *

TO MISS E. M.

London, May 20, 1819.

* * * I AM come to London for a few days to execute some home commissions. These fine showers that are making the hills and vales rejoice, are making London more dreary than usual; and they confine me to a dull apartment, where, in rather lower spirits than are common

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to me, even in London, I sit down in perfect solitude to seek your distant society: my brother is out for the whole day on business. Solitude in the country is sweet; but in London it is forlorn indeed. So you see all things conspire to make this a very animated composition.

My health has not been so good this spring as during the past winter and summer: for this there is "a needs be." But though I believe these continual warnings to be good and necessary; yet *fear* seems to have an unfavourable influence upon my mind; inasmuch as I am to suspect the genuineness of prayer that is rendered more fervent than usual by an apprehension of danger. I feel regret unspeakable in looking back upon those past years of health and vigour that were devoted to self-pleasing. And yet is there not "all consolation," and consolation *for all* in the unqualified offers of the gospel, and in the simplicity of its declarations.—"Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins which are many are forgiven thee:"—what needs one more than this;—and surely nothing less will do—not at least for

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those who are obliged by some threatening disease to realize their own mortality, and to look at eternity, as those who are in sound health cannot see it. In comparing the temperature of my feelings with yours, I was discouraged; yet I know that religion does not alter the constitution of the mind, any more than that of the body. In you, ardent and energetic; in me, languid and phlegmatic, it would never assume the same appearances. They however are doubtless the happiest christians the constitution of whose minds is the most favourable to the *life* of religion. But I feel that these considerations will not serve as an excuse for me, seeing that "God is able to make all grace abound to us also."

Monday morning.

I heard yesterday three good sermons. * * * * * * That in the evening by a plain methodist preacher; the best I thought of the three—that is, the most to the grand purpose of preaching. Why do not we hear such sermons oftener? Some ministers appear to be under an unaccountable infa-

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tuation, as if they were afraid or ashamed to come to the point;—as if every subject connected with religion were to be discussed in preference to that which is the foundation of all;—as if they would rather direct their hearers to any surrounding objects than immediately to "The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." How little do they consider the disappointment they occasion to those of their congregations who go, sabbath after sabbath, hungering for "the bread of life"—who need the consolations of the gospel!

* * *

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TO MISS M. H——E.

Ongar, June 7, 1819.

If the frequency of my letters bore any proportion to the value I set upon yours, I am sure, my dear friend, you would be weary both of them and of me. Never, since the days of romance were over with me (or perhaps I might date a little later than that) never since the termination of a correspondence of unusual private interest, has letter writing been in itself easy or agreeable to me;—though, as a means of maintaining friendship with the few I love, I value it as highly as ever. It was extremely easy to write at that period of life when "realities appeared as dreams, and dreams as realities." O the sheets I have despatched about absolutely nothing! It is

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easy, at any time, to write when interesting facts are to be related, and when hopes and fears are keeping the mind in perpetual agitation. But this is rarely the case during the greater part of our course. When the current of life is seen near its rise—sparkling amid rocks and hills, and meandering through flowery recesses, it is entertaining enough to trace its windings; but when it has reached the plain, and glides in a broad and even channel for many a mile, though its incessant flow towards the boundless ocean may afford subject for pensive reflection, there is little to invite description.

Thus I often contemplate my own course;—the illusions of youth are completely over:—I think there are no circumstances that could now cheat me into a belief that life is, or could be, very different from what I now see it to be. I might indeed be more busy: and so have less leisure and inclination to moralize about it: but this would not alter the case. "Then I saw that this also is vanity"—is the confession that must be extorted from every heart, as one scheme of hap-

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piness after another has had its trial. Perhaps it was after some similar experience that David said—"I shall be *satisfied* when I awake in thy likeness." When we have felt that nothing else can satisfy the mind, then we are constrained to look to the fountain of happiness. * * * * * * It is not strange that the wicked should go on in their wickedness; but is it not strange that those who know any thing of religion should not adorn it more? This is the discouragement. Yet perhaps there are many "hidden ones," who, unknown to their fellow christians, are living near to God, while those who stand foremost in the church are content "to follow Christ afar off." * * * I rejoice to hear from a mutual friend that you are actively engaged in doing good. There is something stimulating in reading Paul's salutations to the good women of his acquaintance;—he evidently singles out those for especial notice who were most active and zealous in good works;—"Priscilla, his helper in Jesus Christ"—"Mary, who bestowed much labour on them"—"Phebe,

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a succourer of many:"—While we may imagine that his more general remembrance—"To all the saints that are with you"—refers to others, a little resembling those modern professors of christianity of whom charity is bound "to hope all things." How pleasant and cheering is it to look at the few who are not of this doubtful character; and how delightful when those who are most dear to us give us this pleasure. * * * This increase of piety in our dearest friends is *real prosperity;* and when we think prosperity of any other kind very desirable, we forget ourselves, and view the world with the worldling's eye. * * *

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TO MRS. W. (MISS E. M.)

Ongar, September 14, 1819.

* * * I TRULY rejoice with you in the happiness of seeing another of those most dear to you "walking in the truth." There is indeed no greater joy than this. ***This is family prosperity.*** How weak is our faith when we suffer anxiety for any other kind of success to exceed the desire for the endless happiness of those we love; and how little do we feel like christians when we are surprised and mortified to see them encountering those trials and disappointments which we know to be the most usual and effectual means of promoting spiritual life. I have just received an account of the severe trial of one of whom, judging as the world judges, one should say that

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severe affliction was not needed. But God sees not as man;—those whom He loves best He ordinarily chastens most, that they may be "seven times refined." "To him that hath shall be given, that he may have abundantly." * * * Poor Mrs. ——— what an unhappy life must hers be! unspeakably more unhappy than it would be if she were wholly destitute of that "little religion," as it is called, that she has! To see age tenaciously clinging to the receding world, is the most melancholy and disgusting sight this evil world presents. * * *

* * * In so small a society as that with which we are connected here, zeal, for want of stimulus, is apt to sink into total torpor. In this respect there are advantages in living in a large town, where the zeal of the few keeps the lukewarmness of the many from freezing. I feel heavily the peculiar responsibility that attaches to me as a single woman, remembering that of such it should be said that "She careth for the things of the Lord;" while, partly from indolence, and partly from a sort of infelicity in deal-

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ing with others, I am too apt to recoil from those very duties which seem to lie most in my way. "She hath done what she could," is a sentence which often strikes painfully on my conscience. It is high praise, and what sacrifice can be too great to deserve it. * * *

TO MISS S. M. AND HER SISTERS AND BROTHERS.

Ongar, August 15, 1822.

* * * As my time is limited, I cannot devote much of it to subjects of inferior moment; but must address myself at once to that which is all important, and in which all other advices are included. But in treating this subject there is a

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peculiar difficulty in addressing those who, like you, are continually reminded of its importance, both by private and public instructions; to whom, therefore, every argument is familiar, and must appear common-place. Nor would I be thought to infer, by any remarks I may make, that your minds are not already impressed, more or less, with the importance of the subject. But from experience I know what need there is of being incessantly quickened and roused afresh; and it sometimes happens that a word from a comparative stranger has more effect than the same thing suggested by a familiar voice.

But now I know not where to begin, nor how to find language to reach the heights and depths of this boundless subject. No language indeed can do this: and therefore we find in the Scriptures no attempt is made beyond the most plain and simple statements; but which are, on that very account, the more striking. What, for instance, could the utmost powers of language add in force to that question—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and

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lose his own soul?" And, my dear friends, there *is* very great danger, notwithstanding all the warnings and admonitions we receive—there is very great danger of losing our souls! It is so easy to pass on from one stage of life to another —from youth to age, with good intentions towards religion, and with a common, respectable attention to it, without once coming to the point —without once tasting the happiness of a good hope, or enjoying the supreme satisfaction of making a full surrender of our hearts and lives to God. Multitudes of the professors of religion thus live and thus die—making their comfort and prosperity in this life their chief object of pursuit: and paying only so much attention to religion as they deem *absolutely necessary* to escape eternal destruction. But this is not christianity, as the Scriptures describe it; and it is surprising that, with the Bible in their hands, any persons can make so great a mistake about it. If God has not our *hearts*, we are not His: —He will accept nothing less. If our affections are not in heaven, we shall never reach it. I re-

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member that, during my youth, I was for many years greatly discouraged, and almost in despair at last, on this account—feeling the impossibility of bringing my earthly mind to prefer spiritual things—to love God better than the world. At length, in a letter from a pious friend, I was reminded that this great work, though impossible to me, was easy to Him; and that he had promised to do it for all who ask. From that time my difficulties began to yield. I saw how absurd it was to doubt the promise of God; and that it was in respect to these very difficulties that he says "Seek and ye shall find." So that I began to see with unspeakable joy that the hardness, reluctance, and earthliness of my heart were no real obstacles, provided that I did but apply to Him for a cure. Yes, to cast ourselves entirely on God, to do all for us, in the diligent use of means, is the sure—the only way to obtain the benefit. But it is surprising what reluctance there is in the mind to do this; and how ready we are to try every other means first; especially we are unwilling to come by a simple

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act of faith to the Saviour, and to accept from Him a remedy for all the evils of our nature; although there is no other way: how much labour is often lost for want of this. Come to Him, my dear friends, and "He will not cast you out." He declares He will not: and come as you are. It is Satan's constant artifice to persuade us that we must wait till we are *fit* to come; and as this faith that believes and lives, however simple, is the gift of God, pray incessantly—importunately, till you receive it.

I am sure you are all convinced already that delay, neglect, or indifference in religion, is the greatest folly—the deepest cruelty we can practise towards ourselves, as it respects our interests in the future world. And indeed, it is so as to this world too. I have seen something more of life than you; and I have lived long enough to see that promise in numerous instances fulfilled, that, "they who seek first the kingdom of God," have other things added to them, in a more especial and desirable way than those who make them the primary object. I am firmly convinced that,

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taking the whole of life together, the most pious and devoted persons—such as made an early and complete surrender of heart and life to God, have most real prosperity and success in this world, as well as infinitely more enjoyment of earthly good. But really this is a point scarcely worth proving, when the interests of a boundless futurity are concerned; yet as it is one of the chief illusions of "the father of lies" to persuade persons that, in becoming decidedly religious, they must sacrifice the choicest pleasures of life, and that God's ways are not "ways of pleasantness," it is desirable to expose the falsehood. All the real and reasonable enjoyments of life are entirely compatible, not only with an ordinary profession of religion, but with the highest spirituality of mind; and are greatly sweetened by it, if kept in their subordinate place: and as for the rest—the gaiety, the vanity, the evil tempers, the restless desires of a worldly heart, its selfishness and frowardness, and all those indulgences which are forbidden to us, they are as certainly destructive of our true interests and happiness here, as of our

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eternal happiness. Of this truth, experience too late, convinces the most successful votaries of this world. But let us rise above these lower considerations;—the question is—are we desirous to secure the salvation of our souls? And it is impossible to fix a steady thought on eternity without being so. Then let us take the Bible for our rule, and never rest till we have a scriptural foundation for our hope; nor till our life, as well as our creed, is conformed to its precepts and examples. Allow me then to mention those means which are most essential to the attainment of this happiness.

To use means is our part;—it is a comparatively easy part; and if we will not even do this, it shews that we are not at all in earnest on the subject. I will mention then, as the first and the last—as that which is indispensable to our making any progress in religion—*daily, constant, private, prayer.* I am aware that where this habit has not been formed very early, there may be a sort of awkwardness and false shame felt in the commencement of it in a family; but it is

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false shame, which a little effort will conquer; and a short time entirely remove. I believe you know that it was my intention to have recommended this practice to you if not already adopted; and now I cannot feel satisfied without doing so; for if ever I was sure that I was giving good advice, I am sure of it in this instance; and I will—I must most earnestly request your attention to it. Perhaps some of you might reply that, seldom feeling inclined to prayer, it would generally be a formal and heartless service; but this is the very reason why it must never be neglected. This reluctance to spiritual engagements is what the best of christians have to combat with; and it can only be overcome by prayer. If then you were to wait till you are of yourselves so disposed, depend upon it, you would pass through life, and plunge into eternity in a prayerless state; and although you may often engage in private devotion with little feeling, and no apparent benefit, yet there is one certain advantage gained by it, namely—that the habit is strengthened; and as we are creatures of habit,

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and God has made us so, He requires us to avail ourselves of its important advantages. If there is any one thing more than another among the many privileges of a religious education for which I feel thankful, it is the having been trained from my early years to retire, morning and evening, for this purpose. I found that a habit thus early and strongly formed, was not easily broken through, notwithstanding all the vanity of my youthful years: and however much I have to lament the abuse of it, yet, if ever I have known any thing of religion, it is to the closet that I must trace it; and I believe that universal experience testifies that our comfort and progress in the divine life are entirely regulated by the punctuality and fervency of our engagements there. There is no need that the exercise should be tedious;—a short portion of scripture read with thought; and a few simple sentences uttered with the whole heart, are far preferable to a much longer address, in which the same heartless phraseology is continually repeated. But as your desires enlarge, so will your petitions; and the

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more you are in earnest, the less liable you will be to fall into hacknied and formal expressions.

There is another practice which, next to prayer and reading the scriptures, I have found most profitable;—I mean reading once every day, at the time either of morning or evening retirement, a few pages of some pious book—selecting for this purpose, not the light productions of the day, but the writings of the most eminently useful and impressive authors. Christian biography also, is peculiarly profitable. This custom need not add more than ten minutes to the time of retirement; and it is, I think, one of the very best means for retaining a daily impression of serious things. Habit also (try it for one month, and see if it is not so) will render this pleasant, even though it should seem irksome at first. If you will excuse my entering into such minute particulars (which I should not do on any other subject) I will add that the most advantageous time for the purposes I have recommended is not that of retiring for the night;—drowsiness will

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generally invade us then; besides, few young people can be quite alone at that time, and a prayer said by the bed-side, with a companion present, is not—I might almost say *cannot* be personal prayer It is a good—I will call it a blessed custom, for a family to disperse to their respective places of retirement half an hour before supper. Nor is it, you must be aware, from my own experience alone that I recommend it; for it is a practice which I know to be strictly observed by all my pious friends, and which I have remarked in every serious family in which I ever visited. As to the morning, it is highly desirable that it should take place before breakfast, as afterwards it interferes with other duties, and is in great danger of being quite neglected. Besides, it is as essential to the health of the body, as of the soul, to rise at least early enough for such a purpose. I fear I shall tire you, and will mention but one other thing, and that is the advantage of a more particular improvement of Sabbath evenings, as the

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time most suitable for longer retirement, and deeper thoughtfulness than the engagements of other days will admit.

My dear friends, be not contented with low aims and small attainments in religion:—they are indeed fearful signs of insincerity; or, at best, proceed from a merely slavish fear of the consequences of quite neglecting it. O do aspire to something beyond an ordinary reputable profession of it! *Here* ambition is sanctified. Determine to number yourselves among the happy few; and do not be discouraged by difficulties, nor think it too much for you to attain. It is not humility, but inactivity and despondency, that leads us to think so. God will give us all the grace, and strength and ability, we really desire and ask for.

And let me affectionately recommend you early to seek to be engaged in some sphere of active usefulness. Doing good is the most excellent means of getting good. There is no mistake greater than to suppose that we are sent into the world only to attend, however industriously,

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to our own personal, or even family interests. Love to our neighbour demands our active exertions in his behalf; and we are all required, more or less, "to go and work in the vineyard." We have all a talent entrusted to us; and what shall we say when our Lord comes, if we have not improved it? Did you never remark in reading the 16th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, how St. Paul, in his salutations, particularizes those who were most zealously engaged in good works?—"Phebe, a servant of the church, and a succourer of many;"—"Priscilla and Aquila, his helpers in Christ;"—"Mary, who bestowed much labour on them;"—"Persis, who laboured much in the Lord;"—while he passes over with a slight remembrance, or notes with censure, others, who "minded only their own things, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's." It must have been gratifying to have been thus distinguished by the apostle; but O, how much more so to be approved by Him, who for our good requires these services from us; and to hear Him say at last,—"Well done, good

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and faithful servant!" We should suffer no day to pass without thinking of, and acting for *that* day when we shall be "judged according to our works," as the only evidences of our faith; and very encouraging is that kind and considerate expression of our Lord, concerning a poor woman, shewing that He is no hard master, and not unreasonable in His requisitions — "She hath done what she could." But how few of us deserve this praise! I am persuaded you would find useful activity one of the best preservatives against the innumerable temptations to which, as youth advances, you will be exposed. How many young persons have blessed God that ever they were led to engage in Sunday school teaching! It profitably occupies that time which, if wasted in frivolity and indulgence, leads to the worst consequences; and in teaching others, a double blessing often descends upon the teacher.

But in engaging in active usefulness, especially when we are required to associate with others, there are evils to be guarded against; and we must be clad with the impenetrable ar-

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mour of christian simplicity and meekness, in order to avoid them. We may have to encounter those who are officious, unreasonable, monopolizing, ambitious, and overbearing; and if any similar tempers are indulged in ourselves, continual contention must ensue. The only way is to rise superior to those petty jealousies, and inferior motives;—to do good for its own sake alone; to persevere in a quiet, forbearing, yielding, line of conduct, which never fails to disappoint and weary out the most troublesome, at last. And even if any should say to us, however unjustly—"Friend, go down lower," our wisdom and happiness is to submit with a good grace, and cheerfully to labour in a humbler sphere. That temper and conduct which is called "spirited," in asserting our rights, and maintaining our consequence, is as unwise and impolitic as it is unchristian-like. Nothing forms so truly great and dignified a character as "the meekness and gentlensss of Christ."

But, with regard to our conduct, whether at home or abroad, we cannot mistake if we will but

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follow the precepts of scripture, in their plain and literal sense. This is too much neglected—strangely neglected, even by those who profess to make the Bible their rule. If we had no other directions whatever for our conduct than those contained in that beautiful chapter, the 12th to the Romans, it would make a heaven of earth, were they but attended to. It is an excellent chapter to read very often, and deeply and daily to study. —It would make a little paradise of any society or family where its spirit was imbibed; and after all, it is at home—in the bosom of our families, in our daily and hourly tempers and conduct, that we have the best opportunity of practising holy obedience to the commandments of Christ. Keeping these commandments, which "are not grievous" — though we are prone to think they are, till we try, implies a continual exercise of self denial; and if we are conscious that we make no such sacrifices—that we are not in the habit of denying ourselves, it is plain that we are not following Him at all; for those who do must bear some cross. There is indeed

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something in the very sound of this word *self denial*, which alarms our indolence, indulgence, pride, and wilfulness; but it is a false alarm; for these very qualities—indolence, indulgence, pride, and wilfulness, are the greatest enemies to our peace and happiness; and one day's experience is enough to shew that, in proportion as they are resisted and mortified, we are comfortable, tranquil, and happy.

May God bless you all, and lead every one of you safely through this dangerous world, to his eternal rest! This is the earnest hope, and will be the frequent prayer of your sincere and affectionate friend,

J. T.

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TO MISS S. M.

Ongar, June 7, 1822.

* * * Do you remember the remark that, the reason why, in the history of our country, the female reigns have been most prosperous, is, that women, feeling their own insufficiency to hold the reins of government, have been more ready than kings, to depend upon the advice and assistance of wise and able counsellors? Hence it has been said, that, in female reigns, we have been governed by *men*; while kings have often allowed themselves and their kingdom to be governed by women. Certainly as much wisdom and prudence may be shewn in the choice of advisers, as even in determining important affairs ourselves. But above all, my dear friend, your safety and

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wisdom will be to "ask counsel of the Lord;" and that, not only in a general way, but with a firm and steady dependance on Him, to do what you ask of Him; and this will not be to order things in any particular way that you feel most anxious for; but to overrule them so as He knows to be best for you. "Commit your way unto the Lord, and He *will* direct your paths;" but I dare say you are already sufficiently acquainted with your own heart to know that it is no easy thing to do this unreservedly. We are so prone secretly to dictate to His Providence, instead of feeling an entire resignation to it. I will venture to add one more particular recommendation; and that is, that, in the choice of persons to advise you in regard to your future domestic arrangements, you will select those only who, in addition to worldly prudence, are qualified by the *most decided piety* to counsel you.

I remember several years ago a very wise, kind, and good man said to me that, as a general rule (though certainly not without exceptions) it will be found, when we have a choice to make in

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regard to our affairs, that the decision which is least agreeable to our inclinations, is most conducive to our ultimate welfare. This remark I have never forgotten; and I have often since proved the justness and utility of it; notwithstanding its apparent severity. I quote it to you with less hesitation, because I know that, in any arrangements in which the pleasures and relaxations of young persons are concerned, I am always disposed to bear to the side of indulgence, to a degree which I have often been blamed for. And I tell you that you may not too hastily conclude my opinions in such matters to be stern or rigid. * * *

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TO MISS E. M******.

Ongar, December 19, 1822.

MY DEAR ELIZABETH,

It is only the thought of your being too busy to attend to any thing but the business in hand, that has prevented my writing before, to welcome you into the new house;—or, perhaps, if I had followed the dictates of my own feelings, and consulted yours—I should rather have condoled with you on forsaking the old one. I can guess what feelings have been uppermost with you in every interval of bustle; and though not in fact, yet in thought, I have paced with you through the deserted rooms—sympathizing with you in the remembrances they awaken. I am no stranger to local attachments, and I respect them

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in others as indications of better feelings. The trees, the walks, the walls, that seem so dear, are chiefly so as they are associated in our minds with those we love, to whom they have been equally familiar. Sorrow in parting with these objects is, therefore, an amiable regret; and it will be felt in proportion as *home*—its inhabitants, and its quiet pursuits, have been loved and enjoyed. Cowper has sanctioned such feelings in addressing his mother's picture:—

> "Where once we lived, our name is heard no more;
> Children not thine have trod our nursery floor," &c.

But my dear girl, while I sympathize with your sorrow, and more than that, love you for it, yet you know I would not encourage its unrestrained indulgence. The proper and effectual antidote to every undue and morbid indulgence of regret is to be found in the cheerful performance of the daily recurring duties of life; which, by the wise appointment of Providence, prevent brooding melancholy, while they do not

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tend (like the relief sought in amusements and society) to blunt the edge of genuine feeling. * * *

TO MISS M. H——E.

Ongar, January 17, 1824.

* * * I REJOICE to hear of your continued prosperity; and am not surprised that the pressure of so important a charge should, at times, depress your spirits; nor that even your happiest seasons should be clouded by the distraction of mind consequent upon it: especially while it is yet new to you. There are doubtless advantages in a life of leisure which, if duly improved, would tend greatly to heighten the hap-

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piness of the christian life. But, considering what our depraved nature is, there is a strong probability that they will *not* be improved. So that, if I might so speak, I believe the chances are greater of making spiritual progress in a life of activity, or even of bustle, than when the mind is left at leisure to prey upon itself, and indulge its morbid propensities.

I thank you, my dear friend, for planning so pleasant a scheme as that of my visiting you at Manchester. I will not say it can never be; yet I cannot indulge the expectation of my health permitting me to undertake so long a journey. I have been very much indisposed, for many weeks past, with a severe attack of rheumatism, which has greatly confined me to the house, and affected my general health. From this, I am thankful to say, I am slowly recovering; but in other respects, I cannot boast of improvement; yet the chastisements with which I am visited are still lighter than my expectations; and how much lighter than my desert! I am endeavouring, but with small success,

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"to forget the things that are behind, and to press forward." But O, how little can affliction in *itself* do to produce spiritual affections! I feel this; and that without the grace of God to help me, all these rendings from life and earthly happiness will be in vain.

* * * I have lately taken a final leave of Mrs. —— the friend of my happier days: it was but a short interview; but we had time to take a hasty and impressive retrospect of the past; ——of life, such as we had each found it; and to compare our early expectations with those circumstances in which we are at present placed.—The moral was obvious—"This is not our rest." * *

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TO MISS S. M. AND HER SISTERS.

Ongar, April 11, 1824.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

I MUST no longer wait till I am more able to write, as every day I become weaker:—though I know it will give you pain, yet I must tell you that I should not be surprised if these few lines are the last I shall ever be able to send you. I am very ill:—Mr. —— came yesterday to see me; and I assure you he thinks me so. It is possible, he thinks, that a change in the weather may revive me;—but I am now so weak that I think there is as much to fear as to hope from the warm

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weather. However, that I leave:—I will take care that you shall be informed as often as needful how I go on, to the last; and I shall hope to hear from you; for though I cannot write, I can read a letter. I thank dear E. for her last:—I am now indeed too ill to accept your kind invitation.—

Monday.

I fear I cannot finish.—O, my dear friends, if you knew what thoughts I have now, you would see, as I do, that the whole business of life is preparation for death!—Let it be so with you. If I have ever written or spoken any thing you deem good advice, be assured I would, if I could, repeat it now with tenfold force. Think of this when I am gone. Tell J. I hope he will read WILLIAMS'S DIARY; and study to become such a character, as a man of business, and a christian. I wish you all to read it. My love and best wishes to I.

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May God bless you all:—farewell! farewell! dear S. dear E. dear P. dear J. farewell! Yours till death, and after that, I hope,

JANE TAYLOR.

THE END.

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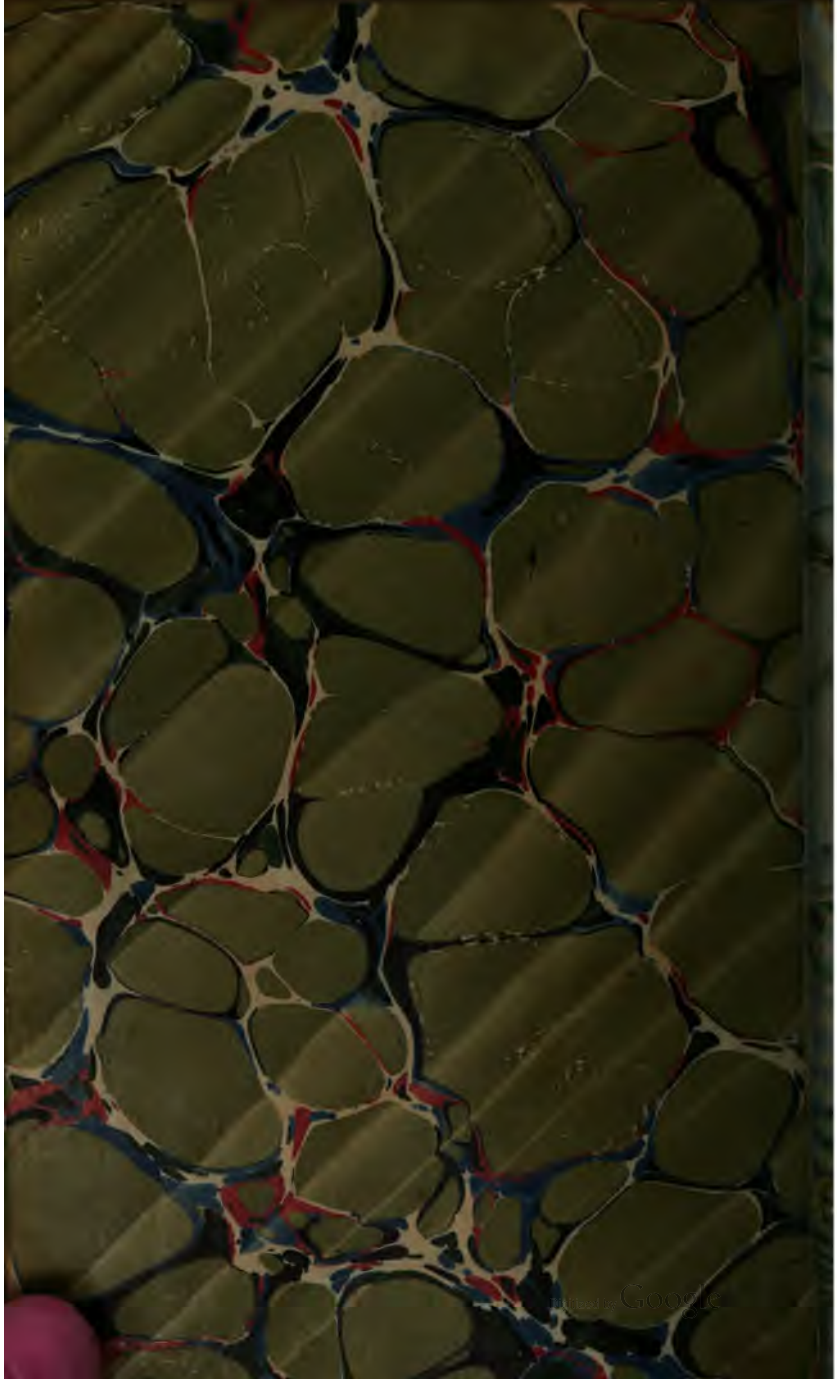

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